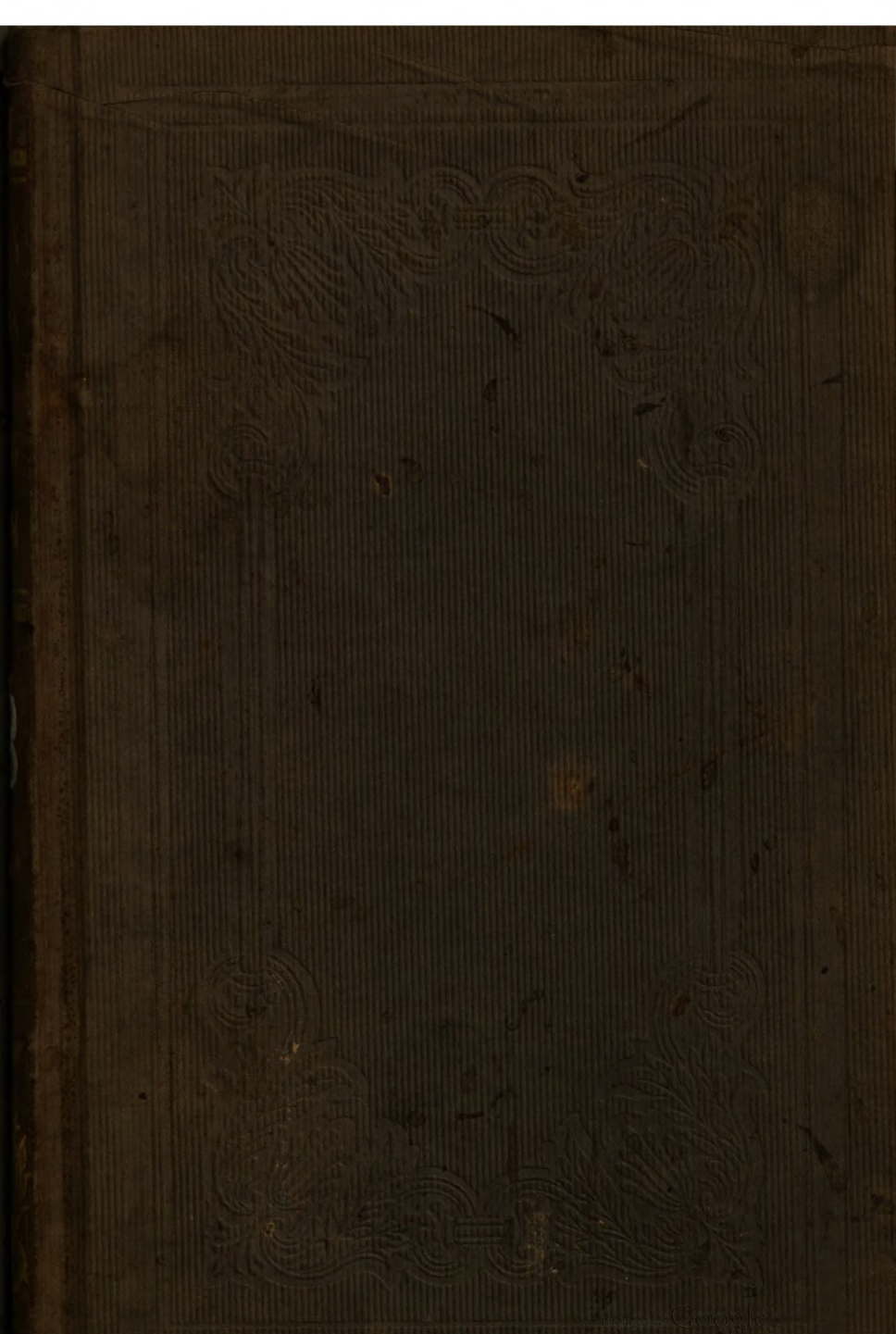

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LECTURES

TO

YOUNG MEN.



LECTURES
TO
YOUNG MEN,
ON THE
CULTIVATION OF THE MIND,
THE
FORMATION OF CHARACTER,
AND THE
CONDUCT OF LIFE:

Delivered in Masonic Hall, Baltimore.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

BY GEORGE W. BURNAP,
AUTHOR OF LECTURES ON THE SPHERE AND DUTIES OF WOMAN, &c.

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GEORGE W. BURNAP,
IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE, OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF MARYLAND.



BALTIMORE, *February 26, 1840.*

AT a meeting of the young men, who attended the course of Lectures by the Rev. G. W. BURNAP, on the Cultivation of the Mind, the Formation of Character, and the Conduct of Life, held at the close of the concluding lecture, N. F. WILLIAMS was called to the Chair and WM. H. KEIGHLER was appointed Secretary.

It having been ascertained by an informal application that Mr. BURNAP had consented to the publication of the Lectures he has been giving the past winter; it was unanimously resolved that this meeting adopt measures for their publication.

On motion of Dr. DUNBAR, it was

Unanimously Resolved, That a Committee of Seven be appointed to express to the Rev. G. W. BURNAP the grateful acknowledgements of the young men of Baltimore, for the very interesting and instructive series of lectures delivered for their benefit—whereupon the following committee were appointed by the chair to carry the above resolution into effect.

Dr. J. R. W. DUNBAR,
Mr. H. L. LIVERMORE,
“ F. AMES,
“ C. H. ARMISTEAD,
“ J. G. PROUD, Jr.
“ F. W. BRUNE, Jr.
“ J. S. McCULLOH.

NATHANIEL F. WILLIAMS, *Chairman.*

WM. H. KEIGHLER, *Secretary.*

To the

Young Men

of Baltimore,

These Lectures,

COMPOSED AND DELIVERED FOR THEIR BENEFIT,

are respectfully inscribed

By the AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E

T O T H E F I R S T E D I T I O N .

THE following lectures are submitted to the press against the author's judgment, merely in compliance with the wishes of those who heard them. They were composed from week to week under the pressure of the labors and cares of an arduous profession, without any anticipation of their being subjected to the public eye. The frequent literary inaccuracies which they contain, must find their apology in this circumstance. Some of the sentiments, likewise, may seem too strongly expressed, and more adapted to popular impression than the cool criticism of the reading public. They must be read, therefore, with that allowance which is justly claimed for all popular addresses. To have softened and qualified the language would merely have frittered away the life and strength of those appeals on which the moral power of such efforts mainly depends.

In the selection of the subjects of these lectures, the author was directed by his own observation of the wants and dangers of young men. They might have been extended to twice the number, and he believes with equal abundance of material, but in that case the chance of their circulation would have been much diminished, as this age seems to be acquiescing in the ancient proverb; "that a great book is a great evil." That they were listened to with interest by a large and increasing audience, is the author's only ground of hope that their publication may do good.

BALTIMORE, *April 1st*, 1840.

P R E F A C E

T O T H E S E C O N D E D I T I O N .

THE rapid sale of the first edition of this work, and the reiterated enquiries which have been made for it, have induced the Author to prepare a second edition, corrected and enlarged. The three additional lectures, which are on more general subjects, were all addressed to young men, though associated together for other reasons than a similarity of age. They will be found, it is hoped, to have the same character of practical utility, which it is the aim of the writer to impart to all his productions.

BALTIMORE, *August*, 1841.

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LECTURES TO YOUNG MEN.

LECTURE I.

ON THE CULTIVATION OF THE MIND.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE undertaken publicly to address you upon the subjects of the CULTIVATION OF THE MIND, the FORMATION OF CHARACTER, and the CONDUCT OF LIFE. I have been prompted to do so, not by any overweening opinion of my own ability to do justice to these subjects, or of my peculiar fitness to enter upon the province of popular instruction and entertainment, but by the conviction that something of the kind is imperiously demanded by the wants of our community, and by the hope that the attempt, though but feeble and unsuccessful in my hands, may lead to something better and more attractive from others of our fellow citizens, better qualified than myself.

No more interesting audience can ever present itself before a public speaker than an assembly of young men. What has this world to exhibit, nobler or more precious than manhood in its prime? Equally removed from the weakness of childhood and the feebleness of age, the form developed and erect, the brow unwrinkled, and the step elastic, the mind quick to conceive, and the hand bold to execute, hope firing the imagination, and courage arming the heart, the young man stands up under the broad heavens the most glorious of the things which are seen below.

Not only is he interesting as an object of immediate contemplation, not only as a being of the present, but of the future. He is not only to *exist*, but to *act*, to *suffer* and to *enjoy*. The long tract of life is before him, and his path through it is still to choose. Wisdom and folly offer themselves as his guides. Knowledge he will gain at length, and if he refuse to receive it through the free exercises of his mind, it must come to him through the sorrows of his heart.

It is not by the communication of any amount of knowledge that I expect to benefit those who listen to these lectures, for the time is too short, the space is too confined. But I hope to do something better, to awaken in some mind the spirit of self improvement. When this is done, more is accomplished in deciding the young man's future path, than by the communication of any amount of information. Every



man, in this land of freedom, is the artificer of his own destiny. The deciding point whether he shall be something or nothing, occurs very early in life. It is not when it is determined that he shall be sent to this college or that, shall embrace this or that employment or profession. It is when he resolves with sufficient energy to enable him to keep his resolution, that he will be a man of intelligence, industry, probity and perseverance. When this is done, no matter how low his condition, or how dark his prospects, from that moment his course will be upward and onward.

It is too common with young men to look upon the world with an eye of despondence. Their way seems barred up. They seem to themselves supernumeraries. For them there is no bench in the world's great workshop, and no plate at Nature's ample board. Despondent youth! it may seem to thee so now, but it shall be so but for a moment. The great and universal laws of death and labor are working for thy relief. They shall make for thee room and employment sooner than thou thinkest. The only question is, for what station, for what employment wilt thou fit thyself; that station, that employment will surely find thee out.

We lay therefore the foundation of all success and happiness in the cultivation of the mind. This will constitute the subject of the first two lectures. When God created the world, the first fiat of his omnipo-

tence was, "Let there be light." So it is in all human enterprises, "Let there be knowledge." This, after all, is the most essential distinction between man and man. It is the first and most essential element of power. It is the germ of all prosperity. It is the means of all enjoyment. Let me then direct your attention to the advantages of a cultivated mind, and the opportunities which are open to all for the attainment of this primary good. But I feel while I am thus commending the cultivation of the mind, that an objection is occurring to many who hear me, that I am speaking of something which is the exclusive business of scholars, of professional, or literary men, or at most, of men of leisure and fortune. Cultivation of the mind, it is too often supposed, must be confined to men of liberal education, who have passed years in the quiet walks of a university, or turned over the volumes of extensive libraries. But all history pronounces this objection false. The lives of the wisest and most eminent of mankind have demonstrated, that the disposition for self improvement is infinitely more important than the means. The *will* will ever make for itself a way. The most eminent of mankind have been those who have been self educated men, who have pursued knowledge under the greatest disadvantages. The difficulty of the attainment has made the prize seem only the more precious, has excited only a more unyielding deter-

mination, and nerved to more indefatigable efforts. Two of the sages who were selected by that august assembly which severed forever these states from the mother country, to draw that immortal instrument which declares us free and independent, were mechanics, they had attained their acknowledged eminence among their fellow citizens by no superiority of early advantages. Franklin became the wisest man of his age amidst the drudgery of types and proof sheets, and Sherman became a statesman while engaged in the still humbler occupation of making shoes. A blacksmith who daily exercises his muscles at the anvil, is the most learned linguist now in the United States. To my own mind, the advantages of what is called a university education, are less and less clear every year of my life. It is true it makes men learned in languages, and books, and scientific phraseology, but it is at a prodigious sacrifice of other things quite as important, a knowledge of men and things, at that period of life too when such knowledge can only be attained. I have often seen and lamented the inferiority of such educated men even to the illiterate, in the practical business of life. I am inclined, therefore, to believe that education to be the best, which combines the advantages of a speculative and an active life. He will be the wisest and most efficient man, who superadds to some regular employment, bringing him largely into

contact with mankind, assiduous habits of study, reading, and meditation. This course of education I verily believe best calculated to develop the whole man, to preserve both physical and intellectual health, to combine theoretical knowledge with practical judgment, to unite refinement of taste with energy of character. You then, who hear me this night, are perhaps in the best possible situation to acquire the most valuable education. You live in a city, where it is impossible for the mind to stagnate. The very newspapers afford you the means of more extensive information than libraries and colleges did three hundred years ago. The average of employment by no means absorbs the whole of your time, nor tasks your faculties to the point of weariness and exhaustion. Books are at your disposal of any kind and in any abundance. Conversation, social discussion, mutual instruction, public lectures, are all within your reach. Nothing is wanting but the will, nothing is wanting but the taste to prefer the ennobling, the satisfactory cultivation of the intellect to the inanity of idleness, or frivolous company, or vapid amusements.

I lay it down then, as a first principle in the cultivation of the mind, that there can be no intellectual progress without study, an earnest, diligent, persevering application of the mental faculties. This is the only effectual means of making the mind powerful in itself. Mere accumulation of knowledge is not the thing most

desirable. It is strength of mind. It is discipline more than acquisition. The faculties of the mind bear a close analogy to the powers of the physical frame. The muscles can acquire strength, firmness and endurance only, on the condition of continual exercise. It is in vain that you nourish the body with the greatest variety of the most luxurious food. Sickness will be produced not health, weakness not strength, unless there goes with it powerful action, continual exercise. So mere desultory and miscellaneous reading is more apt to be pernicious than useful. It is more likely to enervate than strengthen the mind. Hence it is, that we often see intellectual and strong-minded men, who have scarcely ever read a book. They have read men and things, not books, in this great world. What they have seen and experienced in life, has been thoroughly digested by meditation, and been wrought into the very texture of a powerful and vigorous mind. On the presentation of a new subject (which after all is the test of a sound education,) such a mind grasps it with a firm and tenacious hold. It sees what there is in it. It detects its strong and its weak points. It is able to make up a solid judgment, to decide with promptness, and act with energy. Education is not a holiday dress to be put on only to shine and to dazzle. It is an armour of strong defence and solid weapons, by which man goes down into the fierce battle of this

world, conquering and to conquer. That education I honestly believe is best, which mingles books with business, action with meditation, theory with practice, interchanges solitude with society. I consider it then propitious rather than unfavorable in the condition of the most of those who hear me, that you are engaged in active employments. Milton the greatest master in English literature was a considerable part of his life a schoolmaster. Newton interchanged his sublime studies with the dry and monotonous duties of master of the mint. Our Bowditch, that miracle of self education, pursued those mathematical studies, which afterwards made him the translator of La Place, and the universal guide of navigation through the trackless seas, in the uncongenial employment of a supercargo, and a sea captain. And Charles Lamb, that most accomplished of Belles Letters scholars, and sweetest of prose writers, passed his life at the desk of a common clerk. Roscoe, the historian of Leo the tenth, was an active and successful merchant at the same time that he was delighting the world with his literary productions. Bacon was one of the most laborious men that ever lived, in the common drudgery of his profession. He was at the same time the deepest of philosophers, and yet he found leisure so to cultivate elegant literature, as to become the most perfect master of mere English composition, that the nation has ever produced.

Look into our own National Legislature. Who are they who place themselves at its head, and gain the greatest influence over its deliberations? It is not the mere scholar, nursed up in the effeminacy of literary leisure. It is not he whose knowledge gained by mere reading is most extensive. It is more often the man, who has been trained up in the school of business, whose mind has been disciplined by action, as well as stored with knowledge, who has united to the common round of employment, habits of thought, study and investigation. It is the lawyer, who has not confined his attention to the technicalities of forms, or the chicanery of petty disputes, but who has extended his investigations into all branches of collateral science, into history, political economy, statistics, commerce, agriculture, manufactures. It is the merchant who has risen above his class, who has not consumed all his powers in the details of profit and loss, who has read and thought, while he has been building himself up a fortune; who has taken pains to inform himself concerning the condition, physical, political, and moral of the different nations, whose products he buys and sells, who has investigated and ascertained the causes of commercial changes and revulsions.

This leads me to speak of a point, which is very necessary to be mentioned here, for the encouragement of those who hear me. It is much easier to

superinduce the ornament and aid of a cultivated mind, upon business habits, than practical efficiency upon a merely scholastic education. The mind must be consolidated by close and vehement application of its powers to things which task its strength to the utmost. Action forms the intellectual constitution to robustness, energy, and strength. Mere scholastic education has no such power. It may give grace and dexterity to action, but cannot confer original and self sustaining force.

The man who has been exclusively a student, has necessarily lost much time in the pursuit of that which is without value, or the investigation of that, which either never can be known, or would be worthless if it were fully understood. The man of business is in no danger of thus misapplying his time and his powers. He acquires in the practical affairs of life a sagacity, which teaches him to distinguish almost intuitively the useful from the vain. He learns to know his intellectual wants, and what books or studies best supply them. But I fancy that I hear some of you object, "How is it possible to unite a life of business with intellectual cultivation? Not one moment can be added to the hours of the day, nor can weariness and exhaustion be warded off from the human faculties?" There is an answer to this, which is sufficiently satisfactory. Nothing is more true than that if you wish to have any thing done promptly and

well, you must go to one whose time is already, as it would appear, occupied to the full. He has been forced to learn the great secret of this world's welfare, the economy of time. He accomplishes much, from the very fact that he uses all the precious hours of life. The most idle are the very people who complain most of the want of time, and find it most difficult to bring any thing to pass. Let an idle man have any thing to do, which will occupy but a few hours of the day, and he will inevitably put it off to the latest possible moment, and the surest way to accomplish it seasonably and well, would be to fill up the rest of the day with some other employment. But is there any one who hears me, who can honestly say that want of time is the reason why he does not cultivate his mind? Is his time so accurately divided between labor and necessary recreation and repose, that no portion can be snatched for reading and thought? How agrees with this, the daily and eternal complaint that business is dull, and there is nothing to do? No! That is not the cause. The true reasons are want of settled conviction of the importance of the thing, and still more a want of the habit of so employing your faculties. There is the fatal difficulty. The natural and fatal propensity of man, is to do as little as he can, to do less and less, the less is imposed upon him, and if the necessity of labor is removed altogether, he sinks into a mere animal, who

divides his time between eating and sleep. It is in vain therefore, that you afford men more leisure for intellectual culture with the hope that they will improve it. It is in vain that you look to the heirs of hereditary wealth, who are exempted from the necessity of personal exertion, for high intellectual culture. The sons and daughters of opulence have seldom been the possessors of distinguished mental accomplishment. They have rarely been the inventors of art, or the cultivators of science, or the contributors to the amusement of mankind. Their minds are seldom trained by effort and struggle to the achievement of any thing bold or original. It is the vigorous sons of toil and privation who have carried off the great prizes of intellectual distinction. The plea then of want of time and opportunity, of the multiplication of cares and avocations is altogether invalid. Habits of indolence, not want of time, are the death of our intellectual being.

This brings me to observe that *habits of intellectual activity* are every thing to the mind. Mankind are not aware how much of their mental existence they merely dream away. To feel the contrast, let the man of mere business habits retire into solitude and inaction. At first he is excessively unhappy. Life becomes almost a burden to him. In the absence of that intense application and excitement, which mere business created, existence seems a blank, his very faculties become torpid, and lose their power of rapid

examination and prompt decision, and often a man of high intelligence quite loses the run of things in this busy world, and becomes dull and uninteresting. He may continue to read in order to fill up his vacant and listless hours, but there accompanies his reading no intellectual excitement. What he reads makes no deep impression, the memory retains nothing of it, the mind does not reflect upon or appropriate it. Soon it is utterly gone, and the man is just as stupid as he was before. A business life therefore, I maintain, administers just enough stimulus to the mind to preserve it in vigorous and healthful action, and to keep its energies so perpetually awake, as to enable them to grapple, to hold fast, and to master any subject which may be brought before it.

Hence it is, as I would likewise suggest, that the inhabitants of large cities are in a condition most propitious to mental culture. The inhabitant of a city, be he rich or poor, laborer or idler, who is not well informed, has nobody to blame but himself. Here the action of mind on mind is most powerful. Here are assembled the most distinguished talents of surrounding regions, sharpened by unceasing rivalry and close competition. Here the struggle is so intense, that the feeble and unenterprising are soon thrown entirely out of the race, and abandon the field to the strong, the bold and the persevering. No important public event is announced in the city that

is not soon whispered in every ear, and made the common property of all. Society, events are perpetually educating the mind. He then, who will add private study, diligent and judicious reading, need sigh for the walls of no university, for the means of intellectual accomplishment.

In the retirement of the country the mind is too apt to stagnate, each one in the narrow circle in which a man is likely to move, has nearly the same amount of knowledge as himself, the same sources of information, and nearly the same general opinions. In the city there is a wider circle of association, or rather many circles, which entertain different and contradictory opinions, and of course there is a stronger collision of mind with mind. The intellect necessarily becomes more acute, and knowledge more extensive.

The inducements of men of business to intellectual cultivation in this age and country, are peculiarly strong. I shall occupy the remainder of our time in attempting to set them forth. Superior intelligence is becoming every year more necessary for the successful conduct of the most ordinary pursuit. The times have been, and not long since, when the operations of business were simple and easy to comprehend. The population of the country was sparse, and bore no proportion to the capabilities or productiveness of the soil. Communication between different

places was tedious and difficult. Each city, each village, made a community by itself. Its consumption of foreign productions was limited, and its commercial and manufacturing operations were confined to the mere barter of one man's productions or labor, or property, for those of another. There was little money, and little need of it. In such a community there was little at stake, and men of business were mainly out of the reach of commercial revulsions, and when they did come, no one could be much injured by them.

But what a change has taken place! By the introduction of steamboats and rail roads, the world has been made one vast community. Every little hamlet has been dragged from its obscurity, and forced into the commotions of this great world. The quiet mechanic, who has patiently labored his whole life at his trade, and made a comfortable living, is suddenly greeted at his door, by the arrival of a load of the very article he has produced, brought from some vast manufactory, where natural agents are made to perform the labor of man at half the price. And suddenly he finds his occupation gone. The merchant makes a purchase, and before he has brought it home, news arrives by one of those fiery messengers which are perpetually ploughing the ocean, that entirely alters the state of the markets, and puts a new value on every thing bought and sold. Above all, the

invention and the abuse of paper money has unfixed forever the standard of value, and that, combined with the indefinite extension of the credit system, has rendered it entirely uncertain when a man contracts a debt whether he shall pay it with half the sum, or at the sacrifice of half his fortune.

Is it not evident that in such a state of things a much higher degree of intelligence and sagacity is necessary than once was required in order to conduct business at all? Without a wide knowledge of commercial causes and effects, without prompt information of the events which are taking place in the most distant places, and the discipline of mind to reason correctly on them, the man of business is in momentary danger of total shipwreck. The man of business then, I maintain, has more need of a well disciplined and well stored mind, than the members of what are called the learned professions. There is scarcely a study, or a branch of knowledge, which will not be useful to him.

Another most powerful reason for intellectual cultivation, applies to all who hear me, and that is, that you are American citizens, and as such, possessing the elective franchise, you take a part in the government of a great nation. Many times a year the humblest citizen is called upon to pass judgment through the ballot box on the most important subjects of public policy, in short to legislate for a city, a state

or the nation. Is it proper, is it safe that this should be done blindly? How many I pray you, who go to the polls and touch the springs which set in motion the vast machinery of state, which never moves but to bless or to crush, do so with any conception of the turn they are giving to affairs? How few there are, who can render a reason for the faith that is in them, or explain their attachment to one party, or their opposition to another, on any other ground than mere prejudice and caprice? Here every man is a politician, and deals out dogmatism or abuse, just as the one or the other is most agreeable to his taste. But would it not be much better if people knew something of the subjects on which they are so ready to talk; if they would read at least the constitution of the United States and of their own state; if they would inform themselves by actual enquiry on the chief subjects of public policy; if they would read the history of their own country, and if possible that of other nations? Nothing is more dangerous than the right of suffrage connected with profound ignorance. It is committing to chance, or to what is worse, to the knavery of demagogues, the most important interests of mankind. What for instance more miserable than the spectacle which has been exhibited in this country for the last six years, multitudes flocking to the polls virtually to decide on so vast a question as bank or no bank, a question which must materially affect the value of

every shred of property they possess, without having the least idea, (such is their profound ignorance of finance,) of the effect which the vote they give will have upon themselves and their children? Were one half the time that is wasted in idle dispute, spent in reading the authorities upon the subject, and in investigating all that experience has demonstrated upon it, men might at least have the satisfaction of saying that they knew what they were doing when they discharged the highest duty of an American citizen.

It is absolutely sickening to hear men dogmatize about the advantages and disadvantages of a high or a low tariff, who are as ignorant of the subject as they are of the Chinese language. Young men of this commercial emporium, let this never be said of you! All these subjects are as intelligible as the simplest calculations of arithmetic. The facts on which a judgment is to be made up are all spread out in the faithful chronicles of the past. They exist in statistical records, in public documents, in parliamentary debates. The conclusions which are to be drawn from them, have been elaborated by the ablest minds, and their works are within your reach, and daily lie open for your perusal.

The last motive to which I shall appeal in urging you to intellectual cultivation is the fact, that it is the means of immediate and inexhaustible enjoyment. The pleasures of the senses are generally coarse,

transitory, and degrading. The pleasures of a cultivated mind are tranquil, pure, enduring and satisfactory. The extension of knowledge adds a conscious dignity to the soul, more sustaining than great possessions, or outward success. The cultivated and the uncultivated mind, although each day lighted by the same sun and beholding the same objects, live in two different worlds. To the one, the world presents an uninteresting group of unconnected objects, of insulated facts and unintelligible events. To the other, it is one grand system, connected by the simplest yet most stupendous laws, bearing the impress of design and wisdom in its minutest and its grandest arrangements. Where the unthinking see only the present, the thinking, behold the fruits of the past and the germs of the future. Where the uneducated mind has for ages seen nothing but stones and rubbish, the intellect which has been sharpened by scientific research, has learned to read with wonder and rapture, the history of our globe. The storms which merely vex the ignorant by restraining them from their business or their pleasures, are the occasion to the mind that is even slightly tinctured with scientific knowledge, of high excitement, and delightful investigation. Thus the world may be transformed from a dreary workshop into a splendid apartment of philosophical experiment, and life redeemed from stupid slavery into an intellectual and moral existence. To the cultivated mind

a new world is opened in books, in the discoveries of science, in the creations of genius, built out, if I may use the expression, into infinite space, and won from the regions of nonentity, but untrod by the footsteps of the ignorant as the walks of Paradise. To that brighter world, when stunned with the din and vexed with the strifes of business we may at any moment retire, and bathe our weary souls in the very dews of heaven. We look forward too to the period of advanced years, when having served out the term of active life, we hope to receive an honorable discharge. Then, our labors all done, our enterprises all given over, what shall redeem the remnant of life from utter vacuity and nothingness, if we have not accustomed ourselves in our younger years to the quiet pleasures of study, of reading, and of thought? Finally, how is that great solace of human life, society, enhanced by the possession of a cultivated mind! By what are we so much distinguished from the lower orders of animals in our pleasures as well as our endowments, as in the noble powers of speech and reason? What more dreary than the society of mutes? What more tiresome than the idle prattle of those who know nothing? What more delightful than to listen to the conversation of a well disciplined and well stored mind, which can take wide and accurate views of any subject that can be brought before it, which conceives with clear-

ness, and expresses with force, beauty, and eloquence, its opinions, feelings, and sentiments? What a glorious privilege to be able to hold converse with such minds on equal terms, to gain and to communicate knowledge without effort and without end? What more glorious than to be able to hold communion with the illustrious dead, as well as the most accomplished of the living, to comprehend the lofty conceptions of philosophers, to enter with the curious enquirer into the great temple of Nature, to explore her most secret recesses, and contemplate her minutest and most stupendous operations, to people the wastes of by gone ages with the beings who once lived and moved on this our globe, but are now forever passed away, to enjoy the spirit stirring song of the poet which he rung out in the days of his inspiration.

Moreover knowledge is power. If there is any pleasure in exerting an influence over our fellow men, in being treated with deference and respect, in giving wholesome counsel and imparting useful information, then cultivate knowledge, which is not only the instrument of pleasure, but the sceptre of power. Besides, if you have faith in the disclosures of Divine Revelation, intellectual improvement is not to cease with the present world. It is promised to those, who have been faithful to their God on earth, that the vail of flesh which drops at death shall introduce them to

a wider and a more glorious scene of intellectual cultivation. It is promised to those who now see as through a glass darkly, who have but obscure hints and imperfect intimations of things, that they shall behold *all* things in the cloudless and unchanging light of eternity.

LECTURE II.

ON THE CULTIVATION OF THE MIND.

IN my first lecture, Young Gentlemen, I attempted to lay before you the motives which might induce you to apply yourselves in earnest to the great work of the cultivation of the mind. I set before you the advantages, which the man of an enlarged and disciplined intellect possesses in all the walks of life. I broke off in the midst, because time would have failed me to enumerate them all.

The present lecture will be entirely practical, for its subject will be the method and means of intellectual cultivation. I shall speak of the principal departments of study and reading, and discuss their respective influence upon the mind, and their relative importance to a man of business. In doing this, I shall endeavor to keep in mind the great purposes of all intellectual culture, to discipline the powers, to give them acuteness, strength and energy, to enlarge the sphere of knowledge, to gain that extent of information which is necessary as the ground of action, and to cultivate the taste, to prepare the mind for the

enjoyments of literature, and for the pleasures of refined society. These are the purposes of intellectual cultivation. And I appeal to you if they are not valuable, important and noble objects, worthy of your highest aspirations and most strenuous endeavours.

It may be asked, if a young man of business should pursue the acquisition of ancient or foreign languages? This has long been held up to the world as indispensable to a good education. The purposes of this species of mental application are four fold. It is resorted to as an intellectual discipline, as a means of perfecting our acquaintance with the whole compass of our own language, or as opening to us the stores of foreign literature, which would otherwise be locked up from us, or as facilitating professional studies, or business transactions with different nations. I do not deny the great advantages of the study of languages. I am not disposed to join the clamour, which has been raised within a few years against all philological studies as useless, cumbersome, and pedantic. To the literary man, to the public speaker, in short to any man who depends for his power and efficiency on the force of language and of expression upon the human mind, the study of foreign languages is indispensable. To such a man eloquence is every thing, the mere power of expression. Language is itself the instrument of thought. All our intellectual operations

are facilitated by an accurate acquaintance with the whole compass of our native tongue. Hence it is, that there are some minds of the strongest original powers, who are consummately wise and energetic in action, but altogether fail of producing a lasting influence in the world. Compare the career of Oliver Cromwell with that of George Canning. Nature made them both great by original intellectual endowments. They both made their way to the supreme power of England. A man of clearer conceptions, of profounder sagacity than Oliver Cromwell never sat upon the British throne. Had he been a scholar as well as a general, he might have remodeled the institutions of the most important nation on the globe. As it was, he had spent in reckless dissipation that part of early life, which he ought to have devoted to literary culture, and when he got possession of the sovereign authority, when he was called to act upon the mind of the nation, he found himself utterly impotent. Nothing can exceed the fatuity and stupidity of every speech he ever made, and of every document he ever penned. The consequence was, that the sceptre fell from his grasp, and England relapsed into her monarchical and aristocratic institutions. Canning advanced to the highest place of power solely by the force of a mind disciplined and perfected by a classical education, by powerful thinking, and consummate eloquence, and though sur-

rounded by gigantic intellects, England will feel the effects of his administration for generations to come.

Washington achieved the independence of this country by the mighty moral force of his character. There his influence stopped, for he was no scholar, nor was he much of a thinker. Jefferson moulded its political opinions, and ultimately its destiny by the magic of his pen. Sometimes a genius starts up like Patrick Henry or Henry Clay, and by mere force of intellect, attains the highest rank in eloquence, without any considerable classic attainments. But it is only such minds as Burke and Webster, who unite a powerful mind with a complete mastery of language, who add to the most exquisite marble the highest finish of art, that can erect literary monuments for the wonder and instruction of all future ages. To the man of business, however, who does not expect to make his way by the force of eloquence, either written or spoken, classical attainment is a pursuit aside from the great purpose of life.

Just so is it with regard to the knowledge, which is to be attained by an acquaintance with foreign languages. Very few men even of literary leisure are much profited in that way by their philological studies. Few of the best scholars make sufficient proficiency in any foreign language to read with pleasure extensive works in it. There is enough in the English language, on all important subjects, to employ

all the leisure moments of any business man, and what more can he ask? Besides every thing truly valuable has long ago been translated, or is translated as soon as it comes out. We are the heirs not of the blood only and the institutions of England, but likewise of her language and her literature. And what a rich inheritance is that! For five centuries she has been thinking, and writing, and translating for us. Her best literary labors all accrue to our benefit. The toils of painful and unpaid scholars, who have deciphered the mouldering scrolls of ancient days, are as common and as easy of access to us as the air we breathe. There is scarce any thing worth knowing that the mere English reader cannot investigate. It is not worth the while then for the man of business to covet the knowledge of any other language than his native tongue.

For the purpose of foreign correspondence, or the intercourse of social life, the acquisition of foreign languages is practically almost as useless. Not one person in twenty who spends time and money in learning them, ever has an opportunity to use them. Important business cannot be confided to one so little skilled as foreigners for the most part are, and conversation in foreign languages, though often attempted by the conceited and pedantic, is generally unsuccessful.

The studies most relied upon in academical educa-

tion for the discipline of the intellect are Mathematics and Metaphysics. They are calculated to give strength and vigour to the mind by accustoming it to dwell for a long time on one subject, to grasp and retain a mere abstraction. They produce habits of accurate thinking and rapid calculation, habits invaluable to a man of business. Every movement in life involves in its very conception the calculations of quantity and number. He who can make these calculations with the greatest accuracy will usually take his measures with the greatest judgment, and the highest probability of success. What so frequent causes of miscarriage in life as the undertaking of enterprises without a careful estimate of profit and loss, or the want of the proper adjustment of expenditure to income? How many thousand miserable failures might have been prevented by the habitual application of the simplest rules of arithmetic to the common business of life! In these things habit is every thing, and nothing but early habits of calculation can enable a man to carry in his head the exact condition of his affairs, and to judge of the financial bearing of every transaction.

Against Metaphysical studies there seems to prevail a deep rooted prejudice, as something too shadowy and uncertain for serious enquiry, and too far removed from the realities of this life to engage the attention of a man of business. Metaphysics are generally

conceived of after the manner of the Scotchman. "That's metaphysics," said he, "when twa men talk thegither, and the tane does na ken what the tither means, and the tither does na ken what he means himsel." But what is there so revolting in metaphysical enquiry? For my own part I look upon it as the most ennobling of all pursuits, the knowledge of the faculties, the powers, the operations of our own immortal minds, the investigation, so far as we have the power, of the nature of our own intellectual being, the distinguishing characteristics of mind and matter, their connection with each other, the phenomena which we daily exhibit to ourselves of sensation, perception, memory, comparison, and the adaptation of means to ends. These certainly are some of the most interesting enquiries which can possibly present themselves to the human mind. I know of no reason which ought to shut them up from the attention of any human being. I can see no propriety in their being made the exclusive study of scholars and professional men. I see no reason why they are not equally interesting to all, especially as they are connected so nearly with religion, with our duty and destiny as immortal beings, with the question of the freedom or necessity of human actions, our responsibility for our conduct, and our anticipations of futurity. These subjects have been treated by Locke, by Reid, by Stewart and by Brown in the most plain and popular

manner. I see no reason why the busiest should not look into these matters, and follow out the deductions of those acute minds which have investigated them. Metaphysics, I believe, owe their unpopularity in some measure to the hard Greek name that has been given them. It conveys no more idea to the common mind than the cabalistic diagrams of the magic art. Substitute in its place, "The science of the mind," all that is known of that mysterious something within us which comes at our creation from the hand of God, becomes the only connecting link between the past, the present and the future, and then departs to that dim world we have not seen, then it becomes a matter of intense and thrilling interest. At any rate, those who give their attention to this subject, make great advances in intellectual power and acuteness, and in the end dictate the opinions of mankind. By this power, Plato modified the moral and religious opinions of half the world, and Aristotle reigned a sort of intellectual dictator for near two thousand years. Our own Edwards, who spent most of his life in teaching an obscure tribe of Indians, is nearly as well known in Europe as Washington. Constant and Cousin are now doing almost as much to revolutionize France as was done by Napoleon in twenty years of blood and carnage.

The next elementary study I shall recommend as a discipline of the intellect, as well as a means of moral

improvement, is Ethics. Here is another mystic word, apparently invented to obscure a very plain and common subject that of morals, that faculty in man which teaches him to distinguish good and evil, which makes one course of action the subject of self approbation and another of self reproach on the one hand, and the tendencies of human actions to produce happiness or misery on the other, which make them the subject of moral discrimination. It is the investigation of a universal law, by which all moral beings are bound to the throne of God, a law which no finite power can abrogate, no being can shake off.

As a matter of speculative investigation there is nothing more curious than the foundations of morality. No other enquiry is better calculated to train the mind to strength and acuteness. The terms *right* and *wrong* seem at first sight to express the simplest of all possible ideas. Yet when analyzed they are found to involve questions of the most intricate nature, to enter into the innermost recesses of our nature, and to have a bearing on all our hopes and expectations. Is our approbation of one set of actions and our disapproval of another the result of an internal sense, like sight, which distinguishes colours, or is it the result of experience, which sees the different results of different courses of conduct? If it be an internal sense, given alike to all, why are the moral ideas of different nations so very different from each other? If it is a

matter of education merely, why should the conscience be most tender in our earlier years? Why should fraud, injustice, ingratitude, and falsehood be more abhorrent to the young than to those who have had the widest experience?

Then it becomes a question of the deepest interest, as connected with our future condition, whether the moral laws of our being are unchangeable and eternal? Then it becomes a matter of grave consideration, abstracted from the disclosures of Divine revelation, what are the prospects of a mind which has grossly and habitually violated these eternal and unchanging laws. There are two works on the foundations of morality, which contain all that is important on the subject, Dr. Price on morals, and Adam Smith's theory of moral sentiments, the latter of which is one of the most delightful books in our language.

It is probable that the truth in regard to the origin of our moral sentiments, as in most cases, lies between the two parties into which the philosophical world has been divided, that the moral sense is partly the result of instinct, and partly of observation and experience. It follows that the moral sense will be enlightened and strengthened by study and investigation. Such a book then as Paley's *Moral Philosophy* ought to be read by every young man about to take upon him the duties and responsibilities of life.

I know of no stronger proof that the moral sense

is capable of cultivation than the progress of moral reform. The very fact that a community slumbers for ages over vices of the most pernicious and fatal character, and then throws them off as something too loathsome to be endured, is sufficient demonstration that the moral sense, not only of individuals, but of nations, is in the process of education, that the law of God, though written on the heart, requires the lamp of knowledge to make it legible to the mind, and authoritative upon the conduct.

Next to the law of morality, whose legislator is conscience, and whose author is God, as a useful subject of study and investigation, comes the civil and political law, those rules which communities are compelled to adopt to secure order and peace. I do not mean the dry details of the statute book, which are the professed business of the lawyer, but those general principles, which lie at the foundation of all political and social institutions. I am particular in insisting on this, because in a community like ours all government, all rights, all safety rests on the convictions of the people. In this country we have no government, in the sense in which that word is used in the old world, that is a government vesting in persons whose natural study and business it is to keep the people in order. Here we have no other government than the will of the majority, expressed and embodied in laws. And if those laws are forsaken by the popu-

lar will, they are vain and inoperative. The fiat of that popular will abrogates for the time all law, and resolves society back into its primary elements. The only security then that we have for order and peace for a single hour, the only pledge we have for the safety of person, character, or property, is the conviction of the people of the necessity of law and government. I maintain therefore, that every member of the community ought to be made to think on these things. He ought to have some other means of information than the superficial and declamatory addresses of the candidates for public office, which I am sorry to say, more often appeal to the prejudices and passions of the multitude, than to their reason, and their true interests. It was an old Greek proverb, that the audience form the orator. Diffuse among the rising generation accurate elementary knowledge of political principles, and you change at once the style of political harangue from mere noise and passion, into sober, lucid, and instructing debate.

Besides, we must always have occasions of strong excitement. There will always be, or be supposed to be, offences against society, which the laws cannot reach nor redress. There will occasionally be assemblages of the rash and exasperated, prepared to take the administration of justice into their own hands. And when the crowd is assembled around the object of their resentment, phrenzy in their eye, and madness

in their heart, what is to restrain their insane rage from deeds of violence and blood, but the conviction in each heart, stronger in precise proportion to the amount of intelligence, that no such thing can possibly be attempted without an entire overthrow of the first principles of all civilized society—without the abandonment on the part of each member of the community of all that he holds most dear, to brute force, and lawless spoliation. It requires no inconsiderable degree of knowledge and reflection to acquiesce in the maxim, that it is better for communities, as well as individuals, to suffer wrong than to do wrong. I know of no work in which these things are treated in a concise and popular form. The nearest approach to it is Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy*. A book of this kind, adapted to our institutions, is certainly a want in our means of popular information.

I ought, perhaps, here to mention a work lately published in this country by Dr. Lieber, entitled *Political Ethics*. When I first read this title I cherished the hope that the American public were about to be furnished with what they so urgently want—a text book of their political rights and duties, accessible to all, and attractive to all. I found, however, on examining it; that instead of being a plain, common sense, concise view of the great facts of our social condition, calculated to engage and instruct the great mass of the people, it is rather a work of metaphysical theories

addressed to scholars and cultivated minds alone. I closed the book with a deeper conviction than I had felt before, that the power of profitably addressing the multitude is a gift, not conferred by learning, nor secured by talents, but one which can grow only out of the freest association with all descriptions of people. I know of no subject which might more advantageously be made the basis of popular lectures, than our primary political and social relations. I, for one, would be willing to make our candidates for public offices prove their fitness for the stations they seek, by giving to their fellow citizens several carefully composed dissertations on the first principles of law and government, in the place of that party misrepresentation and abuse, by which they now solicit their suffrages.

Next to the study of Ethics, and the first principles of law, I should place Political Economy, a subject which is just beginning to be known as a science, but is destined to attract more and more of the attention of mankind. It makes us acquainted with the laws which govern the production, the distribution, and the consumption of wealth, those great processes which are going on every moment of time, in which every human being is interested, inasmuch as all are, or ought to be, both producers and consumers, and are each instant either growing richer or poorer, all their lives. Without some general knowledge of this subject

individuals and nations are working in the dark, are liable to the most tremendous commercial revulsions, and the most wide spread ruin. It teaches the philosophy of the different pursuits and professions, of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, their relations to each other, and to the welfare of mankind. It developes the great law of labor, which was imposed on man at the creation, and shows its bearing on his individual, social, moral and political condition. It explains the nature and functions of money, both of the precious metals and paper, which has in a great measure taken their place. It developes the causes of national abundance and national poverty. It shows us, for instance, the reasons why England is the richest and Spain the poorest of the countries of Europe. It would not be necessary to study far in it, before we should fully understand the reasons of that awful commercial revulsion from which we are now suffering, that tremendous pressure, which almost makes the blood start from the pores of the body politic, in the midst too of profound peace and universal plenty. We should find that it is as impossible for nations as for individuals to run prodigally in debt, and expend what they borrow in riotous living, or foolish experiment, without finding at length an end to their credit and their means, and falling into the most lamentable embarrassment and distress. A nation that borrows a hundred millions within a few years

must expect to upset the balance of trade. A nation which spends half that amount in foreign luxuries, whose daughters toil not nor spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them, must expect, when it is too late to repent, to be overtaken with lamentation, and mourning, and woe. The study of Political Economy is often a great enlightener of a young man in the choice of a pursuit, for it teaches the balance that must ever be kept up between the different branches of human industry. It teaches that personal labor is the purchase money of all wealth, and as no individual by the mere labor of his own hands can ever accumulate riches, it follows as an inevitable consequence that the mass never can be rich. Labor must supply their necessities from day to day. Political Economy then will teach the young man, that the dream of wealth, in which he is so apt to indulge, must be in nine cases out of ten delusive. It teaches that the safest business must always be that of a producer, and the surest means of support is that which draws it by labor immediately from the soil. It teaches that merchandize and the professions, though they yearly tempt thousands from safer pursuits by the show of superior elegance and refinement, or the example of a few successful aspirants to fame or wealth, are of all employments the most fluctuating, slavish, vexatious and deceptive.

The principal authorities on the science of Political

Economy are Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and Mr. Say. No young man, who has any thing to do with trade or manufactures, ought to be satisfied with himself, till he has read and studied both these treatises.

The subjects I have already recommended to your attention come under the denomination of studies. And I have been particular in naming the best elementary books which treat of them, from the deep conviction I entertain, that there can be no mental progress without study, and no thorough education without laying the foundation in elementary treatises. It is the only means of disciplining the mind, the only means of making general reading agreeable or profitable in after life. I have now despatched what I have to say on the subject of studies. I shall devote the remainder of our time on this occasion to those considerations which ought to direct the course of your general reading, the employment of those shreds of time which occur in the life of the most busy, and which may be left a barren waste, or made to bear the noblest fruits.

It might be expected that under the head of general reading I should put history in the first and highest place. My opinion with regard to history may be singular, but I have my reasons for it. Perhaps I ought to beg pardon of the shade of Herodotus when I avow, that I consider the yearly contents of one good newspaper as more valuable than all he ever wrote.

I think it more important for me, a living man, to know what Ali Pacha and the present inhabitants of Egypt are doing, than what was done by Psammeticus and all the mummies there are in the catacombs. It is a matter of curiosity to know what the world was once, but infinitely more rational to know what it is now. It certainly concerns me more nearly to know how the struggle terminated at Washington a few weeks since in the election of a speaker, than to get the clearest idea of the assassination of Julius Cæsar in the Roman senate house nineteen centuries ago. It is interesting to know what Rome was in the days of Augustus, but certainly more worthy of enquiry to know what Rome is in 1840. The same principle applies to the reading of history which is applicable to foreign travel. It is preposterous for a man to go abroad, till he has seen all that is worth seeing in his own country. It is just as mistaken to make ourselves acquainted with the transactions of ancient times, when we are ignorant of what is doing in our own. I reverse the antiquarian's maxim that every thing is interesting and important in proportion to its antiquity. The study of history should begin not with the ancients, but with the men of our own times. It should begin with, or perhaps be preceded by descriptive, geography, statistics, voyages and travels, journals and letters of foreign residents. When we have by the assistance of these travelled over our globe, and

made ourselves well acquainted with what the sun now shines upon in his daily revolutions, then are we prepared by the lights of history to explore the ages which are gone, to trace back the effects which are now visible, to the causes which produced them centuries ago. A well written history contains all the elements of the highest interest. It powerfully exercises the imagination in calling up the images of past events, and in a manner by the sympathies it creates makes us by turns the citizens of all nations, the actors of all times. The English language is peculiarly rich in this department. Besides the best translations of the old historians, there are well written histories of almost every period of the world, so that if a man were to read nothing but history he would find ample employment for a whole life. I shall attempt no enumeration of what I conceive the best historians. I will merely observe, that history is taking a higher and more philosophical tone. Carlyle's French Revolution, though in some respects objectionable in point of style, commences a new era in historical writing, and if perfected by other men of equal genius and better taste will leave romance and fiction in entire neglect. I am happy to say that within a few years our own country has made most valuable contributions to the treasures of history. Sparks, and Prescott, and Bancroft have written their names by the side of

those of Hume, Robertson and Gibbon on the tablet of enduring fame.

General history however, does not meet all our wants in our enquiries into the transactions of the past. One king, one army, one battle is too much like another. We wish to know individuals. That want is supplied in Biography, the most interesting and perhaps the most useful kind of reading. Particularly is it so for young men. Nothing so rouses despondence, or animates effort, or hardens endurance, as to read the story of the early days of the most eminent and successful of mankind. It has oftener happened on such an occasion than on any other, that those high resolutions have been formed, which have borne onward the young aspirant to the high places of power, of wealth and of fame.

I come in the last place, to speak of the province of pure literature, under which I include prose fiction, criticism and poetry. As the studies I have already enumerated are for the nourishment and strength of the mind, these are for its refreshment, recreation and delight. Like all dainties they are to be used with discretion. He who neglects solid food and attempts to live on sweetmeats alone, will soon be overtaken with nausea, sickness, and disgust; so he, who passes his days in reading poetry and fiction, will lose all strength of mind and energy of character. There are hours in the life of all when the body is exhausted

and the mind depressed, when all its powers of severe thought are expended, and its elasticity broken down. Then it is, that the pages of Scott or Edgeworth seem almost a providential gift, and they refresh the soul with a power as gentle but as potent as the sight of green fields and blooming flowers the languishing invalid. Walter Scott I consider as one of the great benefactors of the human race. He has contributed more than any other individual, with the exception perhaps of Shakspeare, to increase the sum total of its enjoyments. Throughout his voluminous writings there is not a single passage which puts virtue to the blush, or at which vice can take the least encouragement. It was left to him, to mingle the highest intellectual and moral instruction with the most exquisite pleasure.

In this age of the rapid multiplication of books it has become absolutely impossible for every man to examine every thing for himself. Hence the necessity and the use of Reviews, which are a sort of short hand reading. I consider them as among the most valuable productions of our times. They are usually the contributions of the ablest and most accomplished minds on subjects most congenial to their taste, and with which they are most conversant. Reviews then are generally the best things of the best minds, and as it is impossible for every man to read every thing, they are perhaps the best means of acquiring that

general knowledge of the endless variety of things of which we all wish to know something, that could possibly be devised.

I have reserved Poetry to the last among the means of intellectual cultivation, not because I thought its place low or equivocal among them, but because it is so exquisite and celestial a gratification that it is not often that the mind which is merged in the cares and toils of this world, can find time or tranquillity to give itself up to its delights. There is something congenial to poetry in the better part of every man's nature. There is something in its strains, which seems to belong to some higher world, where the soul itself had its origin, and from which it is now in a state of exile. Poetry is not only the instrument of pleasure, but the means of moral improvement. It softens the manners, refines the feelings, while it exalts the imagination, and forms the taste. Poetry in its ultimate essence, is the natural expression of the enthusiasm which is excited in the human heart by the contemplation of beauty, sublimity, virtue, truth, honor, heroism, and all the noblest human qualities. The poet who falls from his high vocation of giving expression to the loftiest sentiments of human nature, is recreant to the duties of his mission. These sentiments have the power of rekindling themselves in the human heart, and thus the poets in the hands of Providence have been the great prophets of the advancement of mankind.

There will be perhaps, no more appropriate place than this, to say something on the collection of a library, which every young man ought to consider, I had almost said, a religious duty. It is surprising what a difference there is in the intellectual attainments of two persons, one of whom has access to books, and the other is debarred from their use. The man of business ought to provide himself with every possible facility, and keep the means of mental improvement so near at hand, that at any leisure moment they shall not be to seek and to collect from far, but invite and solicit attention.

The money that is laid out in books ought first to be applied, not to the purchase of novels and other ephemeral frivolities, but books of reference, such as the *Cyclopedia Americana*, or if possible *Rees*, or the *Edinburgh*—maps and works on descriptive geography. Then elementary treatises on all the different branches of science and literature are in order. Then come pure literature and criticism. In this department *Shakspeare* will occupy the highest niche, and the aspirant to a refined taste in literature may always estimate his progress, by the degree in which his genius will seem to transcend that of all other men.

Books of reference are indispensably important to the man who wishes to cultivate knowledge, because no great progress can be made without systematic endeavours, without the thorough investigation of

subjects as they come up. To flit from object to object is not the way to gain depth or enlargement of mind. One subject must be dwelt upon till it is thoroughly mastered, then it will impress itself upon the mind as one connected whole, and long retain its hold on the memory. Besides, it must ever be recollected that the progress we make in knowledge, is by no means in proportion to the time we consume in any investigation, but in proportion to the interest we feel in the subject, and the intensity of our curiosity.

I cannot close this lecture without adverting to the interesting moment at which we happen to be this evening assembled, on the first day of a new year; and indulging in some reflections connected with the subject of these lectures, suggested by the season. Another year is gone—but we will not mourn over it as if it were lost. It is not lost. It has accomplished its purposes. To our country it has been crowned with the most exuberant abundance that has ever been experienced since the Europeans first set foot upon its soil. But the productions of the earth are perishable, and soon will be consumed, and the only traces of the year which will be left will be the inscriptions of knowledge, wisdom and goodness, which it has left upon immortal minds. It is only by the lapse of time that beings of our limited capacity can make any intellectual or moral progress. We can attend to but one thing at a time. We can look at any one moment

only on a few words of the mighty page of knowledge, that is opened to us in this vast universe. Therefore is it that time is made to revolve, and the great scroll of knowledge gradually to unfold itself, that length of time and successive efforts may supply what we cannot reach at once with our narrow faculties.

If we have suffered any shred of knowledge thus to pass by us, and been too indolent or too frivolous to make it our own, then the knell of the departed year ought to ring in our ears the tones of reproach. And I have spoken to you in vain on the great subject of intellectual culture, if some of you are not this evening resolved, that with a new year shall commence a new intellectual life, that you will turn your attention in earnest to those studies and pursuits you have hitherto neglected, that you will contribute your part to the great work of mental and moral improvement which so nobly characterizes this age. I close then, by wishing you all a happy—and let me add, a studious new year.

LECTURE III.

ON THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN,

YOUR attention has hitherto been directed to the cultivation of the mind, the discipline of the intellect, the acquisition of knowledge. But supposing this great purpose attained, supposing you intellectually accomplished and as far as education is concerned, thoroughly prepared for any station you may be disposed to assume, success and happiness, with the best opportunities, are still uncertain without something more—that something may be denominated *character*. What I mean by character it is easier for you to conceive than for me to describe. It is not genius, it is not talent, it is not acquisition, it is not accomplishment. It is a combination of dispositions, sentiments, and habits of action, which either fit, or unfit a man for the relations, the duties, the trials, the enjoyments, and the business of life.

This character is generally denominated moral, because it is supposed to depend on the will. These

sentiments, dispositions, and habits, are supposed to lie within our power to be cherished, cultivated, and fixed, as a portion of ourselves; or controlled, weakened, and almost annihilated from our moral being.

In the following lectures, which I shall give on the formation of character and the conduct of life, I shall divide these qualities which constitute character with reference to another meaning of the word moral, as it is contrasted with the word immoral.

All the qualities which constitute character being subject to the will, and depending on cultivation or indulgence, are indeed subjects of praise or blame, and of course are moral or immoral, but some of them to a much greater extent than others. Some qualities, though extremely advantageous to the possessor, from the less degree of merit they seem to involve, are denominated excellences rather than virtues. Their opposites are called faults, or defects of character, instead of vices. They all however have this common element, that they are friendly or unfriendly, means or obstacles, to success and happiness in life. Those dispositions, sentiments, and habits, which are in strict accordance with the laws of the moral sense, or in flagrant violation of them, while they immediately promote or destroy the happiness of the individual and of society, are called by the more emphatic names of virtues and vices.

The two first of these lectures will relate to the

first of these classes of qualities, those which though vital to success and happiness, are still not supposed to have so much of the element of morality in them, and are therefore called excellences and defects. The last two lectures will be devoted to that more marked class of sentiments, dispositions, and habits, which are denominated virtues and vices, and which operate at once to make a man happy or miserable.

But before I proceed to the general subject of these lectures, I have one word to say on the use of certain terms, which I conceive to be exceedingly pernicious to young men, and those terms are genius and talents. We hear them used by the young with a frequency, a flippancy, and a vagueness, which is painful, I had almost said, disgusting. The use of these terms operates as an injury to all parties; to those who imagine themselves to possess these fine endowments, by inducing them to trust to their native powers, and to omit that discipline and application which are absolutely necessary to the best capacities, and often leads them to affect an eccentricity of conduct which makes them perfect nuisances in society. As injurious is it to those, who suppose themselves to have shared a slender portion in nature's general inheritance. They imagine that no efforts can place them on a level with the more gifted, and therefore are contented with a dull mediocrity, all their days. I admit that there are occasionally instances of transcendent endowments,

such as can achieve miracles in literature, in the arts, and perhaps in professional attainment. But these instances are exceedingly rare; and then such talents are God's especial gift to the world, not to their immediate possessors. For genius is generally the predominance of one power or faculty, which renders the character ill balanced in precise proportion to its preponderance, and therefore unfitted for the general business and responsibilities of life. Taking out those few instances of unquestionable superiority, there is less difference in the original endowments of mankind than is generally supposed. What usually passes for genius is the result of early intellectual habits, and still more often, of thorough and careful preparation for every individual effort. What is called talent, is that judgment, facility, and expertness, which is gained by judicious and persevering direction of good native powers, and a well balanced mind, to some particular employment. I have seen hundreds of young men pass through the ordeal of an academic education, and then assume their places in society, and I can safely say, that academic rank was oftener the result of intense application than genius, and was no further indication of future eminence than as forming habits of industry and perseverance, which are the first requisites to success in all situations. No man can tell whether he is a genius or not, until he has devoted himself a reasonable time with all that ardour, which

is the characteristic of genius, to that pursuit, which seems most congenial to his natural disposition.

First on the list of those qualities, which are necessary to success in life, I place *decision of character*, and that energy which invariably accompanies it. Decision of character is one of the most important of human qualities, philosophically considered. Speculation, knowledge, is not the chief end of man; it is action. We may by a fine education, learn to think most correctly, and talk most beautifully, but when it comes to action, if we are weak and undecided, we are of all beings most miserable and wretched. There is room enough for us all in this world, room enough for all to be employed, for all to be successful, and for all to be happy. Decision of character supposes us to perceive an end for which we choose to live, and then to bend every power and faculty which we possess to its attainment. The man who possesses this, works to the greatest advantage. He loses no time in vacillating from one thing to another, in this short and uncertain life. He begins early to travel in one direction, and even if his pace be slow, the lapse of time will carry him a vast distance towards his object. It is in vain for one man to expect to be every thing. Hence the diversity which Divine Providence has ordained in the talents and tastes of mankind. The man of decision early obeys this intimation of the wise Designer. He chooses that

pursuit which is most congenial, and resolves to succeed in it, and he does succeed in consequence of his resolution. Let a man's purpose be single and simple, and he is almost sure of accomplishing it. Besides, energy of will is the great secret of power over others. All mankind feel themselves weak, beset with infirmities, and surrounded with dangers, the acutest minds are the most conscious of difficulties and dangers. They want above all things a leader with that boldness, decision, and energy, which with shame they do not find in themselves. "Give us the man," shout the multitude, "who will step forward and take the responsibility." He is instantly the idol, the lord and the king among men. He then, who would command among his fellows, must excel them more in energy of will, than in power of intellect.

Historically considered, decision of character appears quite indispensable to success in life. It has been a predominant characteristic of all great men. It was decision of character, which shut up Demosthenes, in his subterranean study, and made him the most consummate orator of all time. It was decision which made Cæsar, parricide and usurper as he was, victorious in the civil wars over the uncertain and unstable counsels of Pompey and the senate, the same indomitable spirit, which spoke out to the pilot in the tempest, "Fear not, thou bearest Cæsar and his fortunes." It was this decision of character more

than any intellectual superiority, which made Luther the regenerator of modern Europe. That energy of will was the soul of the Reformation, which was expressed in his famous answer to the friends who advised him not to go to the Diet at Worms. "I am lawfully called to appear at Worms, and thither I will go, in the name of the most high God, though as many devils as there are tiles on the house-tops were there combined against me." It was the same quality in our countryman Ledyard, that made him one of the most successful of travellers. In his first interview with Sir Joseph Banks on the subject of the exploration of Central Africa, that gentleman asked him when he would be ready to go; "To-morrow morning," said he, without a moment's hesitation.

But it may be objected, that decision of character is a matter of temperament, to some it is constitutional, to others unattainable by any effort. I answer, that it is as much a matter of habit as any thing whatever. It is never so strong in any one that it may not be counteracted by indolence, by procrastination, or by two or three changes of pursuit; nor so weak in any, that trying circumstances may not bring it out in its full force. So physical courage may be said to be constitutional, yet it is likewise a matter of habit. The soldier who goes up to the first charge trembling and pale, by a few encounters so hardens his nerves that the first cannot-shot, instead of filling him with

dismay, summons up all the manliness of his soul. How often do we see timid women, by being left in charge of a large family, acquire in a few years the decision and energy of the rougher sex. Never then let any man despair.

When you have sufficient intelligence to perceive what you ought to be, and judgment enough to discern what you may be, and decision enough to determine what you will be, the next indispensable qualities to success are industry and perseverance. Labor is the universal law, a law in which all who have their fortunes to make, that is all the young and enterprising, ought especially to rejoice. Labor is the grand magician, which is secretly conveying the good things of this world from hand to hand, while mankind look on and wonder how it is done. Who now possess the wealth and the high places of the land? Mainly those who labored for them hard and long. From whose hands are they imperceptibly gliding? From those who are too indolent to keep them. It is incredible what mere industry will accomplish. In this world of toil, I had almost said that it is the prime requisite. It is wonderful what deception lurks under a few common words and phrases in our language. "What a fortunate man," we hear the world exclaim, when they see a man flourishing in his business. In nine cases out of ten, the very term is a flattering unction, which the indolent or unenterprising man is laying to

his soul, that the only difference between him and his successful neighbor, is that of luck. In a majority of instances he may at a venture substitute in the place of fortunate, industrious. He may venture to say before he examines the case, that the cause of success is the same as was observed of Julius Cæsar; "He always succeeded, because he left nothing undone which could secure success."

Let not the young man repine at the law of labor, and the inevitable and inexorable necessity of personal exertion, which it imposes upon him. It is the most favorable thing to those, who have their way to make in this world, that there is among all the circumstances by which they are surrounded. It is the great agrarian law, which in a manner levels all distinctions, and give the poor man an inheritance in this world more certain, though not so extensive as the rich, in his own talents, faculties and capacities. By making all welfare and acquisition depend on labor, all mankind are provided for, and all monopolies are in effect done away.

It is too common for young men to think the highest good to consist in a life of ease and leisure, and those pre-eminently happy who are provided for without any effort of their own, those who live on the interest of capital. It might quiet the minds of such, to consider how visionary this must ever be as a general thing, and how much happier the world is in

its present condition. Too many young men start in life with the feeling that not to accumulate a fortune, is to live in vain, and to miss the great purpose of existence.

Population, it is found, treads very closely upon the heels of production, so that the annual accumulation, cannot possibly be great. The addition of one week to the year, or at most a fortnight, would produce a famine in almost any country, so nearly do production and consumption keep pace with each other. It is computed by Political Economists that the consumption of one year is equal to one-fifth of the whole property of the world, so that five years of idleness would absolutely consume all that mankind possesses. It follows then as a necessary consequence, that four-fifths of mankind live upon the wages of labor, and so it must ever be. So the chance of any one ever possessing property enough to live on the fruits of it, is only one out of five. Four must live by labor where one can live without it. Toil, therefore, either of mind or body, is our lot. But as a compensation for this, the world actually belongs to those, who are willing to labor; and the very law which forbids the accumulation of wealth, except in a few instances, is the identical law, which decrees that all who are industrious shall get a living. These facts must satisfy the young man that there is no such resting place as he promises himself; he must

toil on to the last. Industry is the ticket with which he must go to the world's great feast, and if he has it he shall find the best of the board to be his.

The same constitution of things, which makes industry so absolutely essential, likewise demonstrates the necessity of *steadiness of purpose* and *perseverance* in whatever we first choose in life. Fixedness of purpose is essential to success in the first place, because no great purpose can be soon accomplished. One man can have but one youth, and that youth will be all taken up in a thorough education for one calling. When the faculties are trained to one pursuit, to change to another is a dead loss of former acquisitions, and the time which has been spent in obtaining them. Firmness, dogged obstinacy I had almost said, is one of the most essential elements of success. Read the history of any eminent man, and you will find that at the commencement of his career, he had difficulties to overcome, and generally difficulties so great that he was about to give over in despair. Had he done so, where would have been his future eminence? He owed every thing to perseverance. There is a striking anecdote told by Franklin of himself, which is precisely in point, and exhibits perhaps better than any thing else, the reasons of his success. When he came to Philadelphia and commenced the business of a printer, there was a combination to put him down. He understood the matter very well and said nothing.

But he took occasion to introduce one of his most bitter opponents into the back shop, which was his only abode, and showed him a loaf of bread on which he had just made a hearty meal. "Now," says he, "unless you can live cheaper than I, you must perceive that it is utterly vain to think of starving me out." It is needless to say, that they gave up in despair. This indomitable spirit of perseverance is always the best omen of success.

But young men come forward into the world with inordinate expectations, and therefore are easily discouraged. You listen to their conversation, and you hear them talk of nothing but some eminent stars in their peculiar walk of life. And it is generally some one in advancing age, that they set up as the idol of their admiration. They vainly imagine, by some strange exception to the laws of nature, to commence upon, or at any rate soon to reach, the same level to which the object of their emulation has risen by the toils of a long life. Most pernicious miscalculation! Let them examine more minutely the history of the successful and they will find that wealth and fame, and skill, which is the procuring cause of both, is of slow growth. Many years of obscure toil are necessary to one of eminent and splendid success. If they covet the success, they must submit to the obscure toil, the long self-denial, the patient acquiescence in temporary privation and defeat. But they are too impatient for

that, and if they do not immediately succeed they become discontented and uneasy, they think they should do better in some other pursuit, or in some other place, and they abandon their business when on the point of success. It is difficult for the young to be persuaded that they cannot sow and reap the same day. Change of pursuit is one of the most dangerous of experiments. There are very few constituted of such firm materials as to sustain the shock without being entirely destroyed as to all firmness of purpose, or steadiness of pursuit.

To arm the aspiring young man with patience, nothing can be more salutary than a careful consideration of those laws of Political Economy to which I adverted, which render the rapid accumulation of wealth in any community absolutely impossible. If impossible for the whole community, it must likewise be to the individuals which compose it. Such accumulation of property cannot take place in the ordinary way of business. Regular business yields only an increase according to the capital and skill there are employed in it. All the fortunes then, that were ever made, began small, or rather at nothing, with skill and labor alone. Their accumulation is necessarily gradual. There can be no sudden accumulation without a corresponding risk, in short without gambling.

And here candor compels me to confess that this has been too much the state of American trade for the

last ten years. There has crept into this land the most inordinate passion for wealth that ever afflicted any people since the commencement of time. There never was a country in the world, where there was such a general diffusion of the comforts and conveniences of life. Of course there never was a country where there was so little difference between the rich and the poor, where the rich had so little advantage from riches, and the poor so few privations from poverty. It follows, that there never was a country where riches were really of so little consequence. Yet there never was a country where they were pursued with such headlong haste. Instead of awaiting the slow but natural process of gradual accumulation upon actual capital, the ambitious and over-enterprising stretch themselves entirely beyond their means, and of course launch boundlessly forth into the field of adventure. They thus take business from its natural channels, which really ought to spread and be diffused among many, trading within their means, and concentrates it in the hands of a few, who become unsafe and uncomfortable in their business in precise proportion as they become unduly extended. The end of living, then, which is to live and be happy, is lost sight of in one of the merely accidental and accessory consequences of transacting business, that of getting rich. So habitually absorbed are business people in this thing, that at the end of the year, when they

examine their accounts, the measure of their satisfaction is altogether determined by the balance sheet of profit and loss. That they have got a living in the meantime in a comfortable or even splendid style, is nothing, that is, they are entirely insensible to the great fact, that for one year, for a thirty-fifth part of the average life of man, they have accomplished all that could be accomplished for their earthly well being, a full satisfaction of all their reasonable wants.

This strange idea that all enjoyment is to be postponed till after the accumulation of a certain amount of wealth is one of the absurdest and most pernicious that ever came into the human mind. It produces a rabid pursuit of wealth for its own sake, which is said to be peculiarly aggravated in the American character. I once heard a young man, who was just commencing business for himself, but whose father was worth three millions say, that he intended to be married when he was worth four. The young man is now in his grave, not however, before accumulating a fortune of his own. When I heard of his death, and reflected on his speech to me many years ago, I could not but think of him as the very impersonation of the mania of the times.

The natural course of things, and therefore we have every reason to believe, the happy one, is for the young man to commence his career on his own resources, or at best with a good education. His wants are few, his income is small, and by learning to

manage his small resources he is in the very school best calculated to fit him to manage large ones. He accumulates, or ought to do so to some extent, under all circumstances. He so places his accumulations as themselves to be productive, so that he soon comes to be a capitalist, in a small way it is true, but as really and advantageously as the richest in the land. He is supported then partly by capital, and partly by the wages of labor. In proportion to his prudence and good management, the proportion of his income from capital will increase till he becomes affluent, or at least maintains himself comfortably through life. This is the lot of man, and if he choose to be so persuaded, his happy lot. It spreads over a whole life the most pleasing of employments, that of bettering our condition. The sudden accumulation of wealth defeats this purpose, and as much as it adds to the sense of security, it takes from the interest of life by depriving it of all enterprise.

Let not the young man then so bitterly repine that he commences life with nothing. Providence has not so ordered it without design. It is the best discipline of character, the best safeguard of virtue, the only means of educating the powers to the full measure of their capacities. God withholds the command of ample means from you before middle age, because you are not fit to be trusted with them. Nine out of ten are ruined by the uncontrolled command of money before

the age of thirty. Before that period it usually turns into horses, dogs, idleness, drinking, gambling, debauchery and ruin.

This leads me to say, that all these excellent qualities and attainments, education, decision, industry and perseverance will be vain, unless there be added to them the habit of economy. It seems to be the design of Providence to form the young to this virtue by limiting them in the means of expenditure. But the discipline of early life does not always produce that effect. Through the indiscretion of foolish indulgence of parents, we often see habits of expense incurred at a very early period, quite as fatal to the comfort, the respectability, and peace of after life as absolute vice. No mistakes are more sincerely mourned over in after life, than a foolish waste of money in youth. The thing is altogether a matter of habit, and he who does not set his habits right in this particular, will lament it all his days. But the young man, because his real wants are few, imagines they always will be. Because he has to provide for himself alone he has no idea that others are to be dependent upon him. He has health, youth, energy and strength, and he forgets that they will not always last. He not only expends too much, but upon the most idle, frivolous and transitory gratifications, generally in the purchase of pleasures, which are positively pernicious. It is not realized how precious a period

of life that is, in which a man is capable of an energetic devotion to business. That is the golden opportunity, and if it is suffered to pass by unimproved, the remnant of existence must be sad indeed. The great fact is too often lost sight of, that human life begins and ends in dependence. The mature man is already in debt to the great copartnership of the human family to the amount of the expenses of his support and education thus far. He must be indebted to it for his support during that period, which must elapse between the time of active service and his departure from the world. He then, who lays up nothing, but expends as fast as he earns in that part of life, when he is able to refund his indebtedness to the world, is a defaulter to the concern. The habits of profusion, which are indulged in by the Americans, are the astonishment of foreigners, and the wonder of the world. Nothing but the most exuberant natural resources could save us from national bankruptcy.

But habits are not all that constitutes character. It includes also sentiments, feelings, dispositions. These may be noble, pure and generous, or they may be mean, narrow and degrading. These being the fountain of all action, it is much safer to cultivate them than to study any abstract rules dictated merely by the understanding, and the sense of propriety. The sentiments, feelings, and dispositions are always speaking out, even in those persons, who exercise the

most cautious self-restraint, and even when concealed, always will be the source of happiness or misery, of good or ill success. The best test of these perhaps is our conduct under the natural workings of ambition. This is a passion implanted in every human breast for the best of purposes. It is put there as a stimulus to action, enterprise and self-cultivation. No man is without it, and no man has any need to disown it. In itself it is neither good nor bad, but merely a constituent element of human nature. And it will prove a blessing or a curse just according to the moral sentiments, feelings, and dispositions, with which it is connected. There is no better sign in a young man than ambition, provided that other things are kept in a sound state. Then it will be manifested in a love of excellence, an ardent desire for personal improvement, the best foundation for great attainments. When this is the case, you will see the young man filled with the sentiment of reverence for the good and the great, as well as a desire to emulate them. You will hear him speak with enthusiasm of those who have distinguished themselves in that walk of life which he has chosen. He will speak of his own competitors with candour and fairness, and ask no advantages but those which may be gained by honorable competition. Such a man's path will be upward and onward. It will cost him many a hard struggle with the meaner passions. But if he succeeds, he will have the approba-

tion of his own breast, the respect and applause of all impartial spectators, and peace with those with whom he is brought in contact.

But let the same passion of ambition be connected with mean, base sentiments, feelings and dispositions, and it creates a character uncomfortable in itself, and odious to others. Instead of admiration for the distinguished in his walk of life, you will hear from such a person nothing but detraction and disparagement. Instead of a noble emulation to reach their standard, there is a base, envious disposition to bring them down to his. And these mean sentiments carry with them their own punishment. They make all good fellowship and hearty intercourse impossible, and fill the soul with perpetual repining and discontent.

I know no better pledge of success and happiness in a young man than that assemblage of sentiments, feelings and dispositions, which for want of a better name, I shall denominate *humanity*. It has the testimony in its favor of the whole world. It is called by various names under different circumstances. The man of the world affects the appearance of it, because he finds it necessary to success, the real gentleman labors after it, the true enlightened christian possesses it. It is nothing more nor less than the sentiment of reverence for human nature in every form and every condition, respect for what is truly excellent, admiration for what is truly great, sympathy for all that is

miserable, compassion for all that is weak, and growing out of it, justice, delicacy and honor in all the business of life. These sentiments may be difficult to maintain through life. Ambition besets the young man, and urges him to climb, no matter whom he jostles, or whom he overthrows; the end seems to sanctify the means. The same spirit of humanity should come in, and lead him to reflect, that the world was not made for him alone, but for all who will honestly strive for its good things. Prosperity assails him and he is tempted to treat his fellow creatures with negligence or hauteur, because he can do so as he supposes with impunity. This blessed spirit of humanity must come in, and subdue the swelling heart to the simplicity of a child. Adversity overtakes him, and then his whole temper and character are in danger of being soured. He is tempted to repine at his lot, and look with an evil eye on those whom misfortune has left unscathed. This same gentle spirit of humanity must come in, and teach him the hardest of all lessons, to sympathise with that prosperity which he cannot partake. Evil companions attempt to seduce him into the paths of sensuality and intemperance. Next to religious principle, the most powerful restraint is this same spirit of humanity which tells him that by going wrong he cannot injure himself alone. There are others, who ought to be dearer to him than life, whom his misconduct will

involve in ruin, and cover with shame. Thrice then is he prepared to succeed, thrice is he armed against all mortal ills, not only whose habits are good, but whose sentiments, feelings and dispositions are pure, generous, noble and elevated.

LECTURE IV.

ON THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN,

IN my last lecture I attempted to define what is meant by character. We considered it to be that combination of dispositions, sentiments and habits of action, which either fit or unfit a man for the relations, the duties, the trials and enjoyments of life. We divided these characteristics into two classes, those which may be considered excellences and defects of character, and those which are called by the more emphatic name of virtues and vices.

I enumerated some of the habits of action, which I deemed most necessary to success and happiness in life. I shall in the present lecture hold up to your view some of the opposite qualities, which bar the way to all eminence, success or comfort.

The first is a total want of decision, enterprise, energy and perseverance. We often see this prove fatal to all usefulness and prosperity in cases where there is the best education, excellent dispositions, an

unsullied moral character, and rare opportunities. It is worth while for a young man carefully to consider these cases of failure, and their probable causes. Among the most prominent is a morbid sensibility. We sometimes see the young man, just prepared for active business, shrink from it, and become almost useless to society. The great battle of life is about to commence, the drums beat and the trumpets sound the charge, and the soldier turns pale and refuses to march into the fight. There is a want of moral courage, which is quite as necessary to the man of business as physical courage is to the soldier. How far this is the result of over-indulgence at home, or of a delicate nervous temperament, it may often be difficult to determine. But from whatever cause it arises the effect is the same, a disqualification for the active business of life.

The poet Cowper is perhaps the best illustration of the temperament to which I refer. He was endowed by the Creator with a noble intellect, his moral sense was most tender and susceptible, his affections warm and genial, his education, careful and complete. His connexions were respectable, even powerful, and the best situations were open to his ambition and enterprise. But when the time of action came, he found himself without heart, or soul, or strength, he was compelled to decline all active business, and sunk into a despondency, which lasted as

long as life. There is another impediment which often blasts the prospects of a young man, a fastidiousness, which finds something insupportably irksome in every employment. If he is apprenticed to some mechanic art, his task is too hard, his hours of labor too many, his indulgences too few. But the same disposition would be equally discontented any where. Had he been sent to a university he would have been just as dissatisfied with the stern discipline, and hard tasks which are there imposed. The professions would satisfy him as little. The slow progress and the vexations of the law, would be equally a subject of complaint. The horrors of a sick room would disgust him with the profession of medicine, and the monotony of a clergyman's life would be found equally intolerable.

A young man, who detects any such symptoms of indecision or fastidiousness in himself has just cause for alarm. His all is at stake. Nothing but the firmest exertion of will can save him. But let him know for his encouragement, that his difficulties are all vincible. The will, like the muscles, grows strong by being exercised. All mankind are awkward and timid in any thing they have never practised. It is only practice that can make us expert in any thing. Indecision, fastidiousness, want of moral courage are capable of cure. Consider what a plastic thing human nature is. The new born savage is the same

identical human nature with the nursling of palaces. But what different beings does education make them! The one becomes hardy, daring, patient of hunger, cold, privation, suffering, contented and cheerful with the most miserable accommodations. The other is trained to all manner of personal indulgences, luxuries and comforts. Without habits of application, all labor appears a burden, privation seems to make existence desolate, and responsibility weighs like an incubus upon the spirits. To the soldier at first sight of a camp, its coarse fare, its perpetual fatigue and exposure seem utterly appalling. But he lies down in his rude tent, and weariness sweetens his slumbers, a good appetite reconciles him to the most indifferent food, and he soon learns that the life of a soldier has its charms, or at least that existence under those conditions is supportable. If he returns to civil life, the comforts of a home seem to him for a long time entire superfluities. A blanket on the floor is just as acceptable as the softest bed. Nothing can be more revolting to weak nerves and a fastidious taste, than the profession of a surgeon, and perhaps we may add that of a physician. The preparatory studies are most shocking to our natural sensibilities. To pass the lonely night in cutting in pieces ghastly corpses, in handling rattling skeletons, the very sight of which at first fills us with horror and disgust, to carry the knife among the shrinking nerves of the living body,

to a person of great natural susceptibility of temperament, seems at first sight, an absolute impossibility. But the thing is really accomplished every day. The medical student soon learns to sleep soundly surrounded by the horrible paraphernalia of the dissecting room. The surgeon's equanimity is not disturbed, nor his digestion impaired by performing the most painful operations.

Now I would ask the young man who faints in spirit at the prospect of the responsibilities of life, who feels no decision, no moral courage for the great conflict, and is therefore in extreme danger of sinking into despondence and imbecility, is there any trial so difficult to meet, any repugnance of feeling so hard to overcome in any walk of life, as those I have enumerated. Let no young man therefore, shrink before any thing whatever, no labor however hard, no task however revolting, no responsibility however crushing that is necessary to success in the pursuit which he embraces. What man has done, man can do again. You wear the human form, let nothing that humanity has ever accomplished appal you. At any rate you can lose nothing in making the most strenuous exertions. It is better to rush into the battle and die sword in hand, than to shrink into a corner and die the ignoble death of a coward. Action, enterprise is happiness, it affords delightful play to the faculties, and is invariably borne up by the exhilara-

tion of hope. It may and generally does succeed, or it forms the character to such decision and force as to enable it to command success in some other line. Pusillanimity on the other hand, cannot lead to any thing good. It is in itself wretchedness and woe.

Another cause of miscarriage and unhappiness, against which the young have peculiar need to be warned, is false pride about employment, in short scruples which some unfortunately entertain as to the honorableness of personal labor, and the relative advantages of a laborious and an idle life. There is, it must be confessed, a natural feeling of rebellion against the great law of labor imposed on man at his creation, not only on the score of indolence, but of pride. Perhaps I ought not to call it natural for I hardly think it is. It can scarcely be supposed that the Deity would have created man with a feeling of contempt for that peculiar lot for which he has designed him. There seems to have been nothing of it in the earliest times. The patriarchs, who certainly were as dignified as any portion of mankind, felt no degradation in tilling the earth and keeping cattle. But increase of wealth enabled a few to live without toil. They were enabled to accumulate about them a few more of the conveniences and luxuries of life, and to pass their time in idleness. Thus idleness gained by association, a reputation and a respectability which it was far from meriting, and the opinion too of

superior happiness. This feeling concerning labor has been propagated from age to age, and in countries where the idle make a class, they manage to control public opinion. This evil was greatly aggravated by the feudal system. The Romans during the ages of the Republic, seem to have entertained no such contempt for manual labor. Cincinnatus was found at the plough when he was chosen supreme magistrate of the state. Among the ancient Hebrews no dishonor seems to have attached to any of the ordinary occupations of life. Elisha the prophet, appears to have been a man of wealth, yet he was found ploughing in the field.

But in the middle ages, Europe was conquered by a horde of military adventurers, and parcelled out among them in the form of immense landed estates. The former inhabitants were reduced to a state of slavery, or rather held their lands under obligations of personal service, which amounted to nearly the same thing. The necessity of toil became therefore a badge of servitude, idleness the outward symbol of nobility. This acquisition of untold wealth without labor or personal merit, by violence alone, and then the transmission of that wealth by the laws of primogeniture, seem to have sapped the foundation of all true estimation of character. In England, our mother country, these institutions perpetuated, have kept alive the same feeling, and society is there divided by

barriers which are absolutely impassable. In this country, it was to be hoped, that man having shaken off the unjust institutions of the old world, would likewise cast off its unjust prejudices. The settlement of a wilderness where every man was the artificer of his own fortune, it might naturally be supposed, would restore labor to its primitive estimation. The establishment of republican institutions one would expect might have the same tendency. Yet we see the old leaven working in the opinions of society even here. Our country is suffering from this very cause at the present moment. Agriculture and the mechanic arts have been despised and neglected, not because they promised a less comfortable support, for this is not the fact. In no country upon the face of the earth were there ever offered such inducements to agricultural enterprise. Mechanical skill too, is every where abundantly rewarded. But there is a feeling of degradation attached to the idea of personal labor, which is unphilosophical, immoral and unchristian. Therefore it is, that there is such a rush from all quarters into the professions. A new village hardly springs up in the West, before there are professional men enough in it to do the business of three. At the same time there are lying uncultivated, millions of acres of the public lands.

But it may be objected that the intellectual cultivation, which I have been urging, has a tendency to

produce that very fastidiousness, which unfits a man for a life of toil. To this I answer, that the feeling against the respectability of labor is a prejudice, false and unfounded in the nature of things, and derived entirely from an accidental association of ideas. The fact is, that one kind of labor is about as respectable as another. The person dignifies the employment, not the employment the person. Those who have hitherto done the labor of the world have had no opportunities of education and refinement. In some communities it is thought a demeaning and defiling occupation to till the soil. The employment is associated with the sights and sounds of the farm-yard, with coarse clothing and hard hands. But is there any comparison between the cleanliness and agreeable objects presented by such a life, and presiding or pleading in a criminal court, where all that is vile and loathsome in humanity is hourly the subject of contemplation and action, and where the very air reeks of unwholesomeness and pollution?

That this feeling against the respectability of labor is a prejudice, is demonstrated by the fact, that there are communities where it does not exist. Where property and education are universally and nearly equally diffused, labor is no such degrading badge. The employer and the employed work side by side without producing presumption on the one hand, or a feeling of degradation on the other. They entertain

each other with intelligent and instructive conversation, and not with slang and vulgarity as is the case among gangs of mere, unmixed, hired laborers.

In this connexion I would advert in the way of caution to certain sentiments, which may be called the *sentiments of position*, because they are apt to spring up in the different positions in which we chance to be placed, but which in their excess, are irrational and injurious. We are all weak and fallible, liable to be affected by the station we occupy in society. We all have the elements of two opposite characters in us, which will be developed by circumstances. Every man has within him, the passions and sentiments which will make him a haughty aristocrat, or a fierce democrat, and he may be either, or both by turns, just as his relative position may develope or repress either of these classes of sentiments and passions. It is wisely ordered we may presume, that there shall always be two parties in politics, in order to keep the balance of human affairs. But it becomes a great evil when these opposing sentiments are suffered to gain such a preponderance as to embitter the feelings, and interrupt the harmony of society. The possessor of wealth is the possessor of power, and if he be not very watchful over himself, he acquires ideas which are not altogether republican. Instead of regarding himself, as he preeminently is, the servant and steward of others, a mere

trustee of society, power makes him forget right, and he imagines himself of more importance than the man who labors for him. And so he begins to talk of the laboring classes as an inferior order. He has much to lose, he therefore is in favor of a strong government and of keeping things as they are. He wants no improvement, because it would be an innovation, and might contribute to render the present state of things unstable. The agitations and excitements of party drive him into extremes. He begins to consider all questions as they will bear on this great relation of property and power. By a natural transition, he learns to consider those whom he is always opposing as his natural enemies, not as struggling for right, even in their own apprehension, but as malignants, agrarians, and disorganizers. Thus political parties become the means of immeasurable mischief. Nothing can be proposed, even sincerely, and for the public good, without being made a party question, and being used as an instrument either of building up or pulling down one side or the other.

But the same man being placed in a different position would have entertained precisely the opposite sentiments. Or let him become reduced, or desperate in his fortunes, and then his opinions concerning the nature and end of government undergo an entire revolution. It is not for the protection of property he thinks, for the rich are able to take care of them-

selves, but for the protection of the weak against the strong. Indeed so extravagant are the expectations of some from government, that they hope it will produce not only equality of rights, but equality of property, talents, advantages. This of course can never be done, and in disappointment of unreasonable hopes they will turn radicals and inveigh indiscriminately against all parts of the established order of things. Some become so ultra as to denounce all government as unnecessary oppression, mere tyranny and usurpation. Now all this party violence, prejudice and animosity is totally uncalled for. Neither party is as bad as the other represents it. No party wishes to ruin its country. The worst it ever does, is to adopt measures for party purposes, which may be of doubtful, perhaps of pernicious tendency. This is one of the weaknesses of poor, fallible human nature, and must be allowed for in all governments. To mitigate these hostile feelings, which are too apt to grow out of political contests, the young man ought early to reflect that parties are necessary to a free state, and the balance of parties is the conservative principle among all people, who attempt to govern themselves; and in the composition of all parties these sentiments which arise out of position, must ever occupy a conspicuous place. Every man should ask himself, if he occupied the position of his opponent, whether he would not probably entertain the same feelings and opinions.

But above all things, the young man has need to be warned against turning politician as a business and profession. Of all employments this is one of the most wretched and unprofitable. Too often a young man, who has a more than ordinary talent for talking, (the mischief generally commences here,) begins to think because he can entertain a circle of his companions with a wordy and superficial dissertation on public affairs, that he discovers in himself the talents of a statesman and legislator. Seductive visions begin to float before his imagination of political power and consequence. He pictures himself addressing multitudes, swaying legislatures, mounting from one grade of office to another till the highest places in the country seem to be at his disposal. The man has hitherto perhaps been honest in his political opinions, but the probability of his continuing so is very small.

Having commenced the life of a politician, bent upon succeeding at any rate, the question with him is no longer what is true and what is right, but what will be popular. He looks out to see what questions are likely to occupy public attention, and what side is likely to find most favor with the multitude. He throws himself into the arms of that party which according to the best of his judgment is likely to succeed, and becomes most clamorous for their most popular measure, right or wrong. Perhaps he gets into office and enjoys for a brief space the

power and emolument he so ardently coveted. But the political wheel is ever revolving and will not stop at the precise moment when he is at the culminating point, another aspirant is already training to push him from his seat, and the Sisyphean task is all to go over again. In the meantime his business, if he had any is gone, the best part of his life is spent, and it is more than an even chance that the convivial usages of the electioneering campaign have fixed upon him habits, which are afterwards his scourge, and perhaps his ruin. Of all pursuits the last in which a young man should engage, is the career of political ambition.

There is a fault of the young, foreigners say, peculiarly characteristic of our country, which I should deem myself unfaithful to the duty I have undertaken had I failed to notice, and that is, a preposterous precociousness, an affectation of independence, an insubordination to superiors, an entire absence of reverence for the aged and of deference to those who have more wisdom and experience than themselves. Majority in old fashioned times was fixed at twenty-one. Now it has got down to about fourteen. At that age, it is now customary for the young citizen of free and independent America, to declare himself free and independent of parental control, and to set up for himself. He takes possession of his father's house, and uses the old people for his own convenience. He insists on having his own pursuits, his own hours, his

own company, his own opinions. His apparel and accommodations must be the most luxurious. He mounts his cane and his segar, and commences a gentleman of pretty considerable importance. Is it possible that any thing but misery and ruin can come from such an unnatural state of things? These sentiments of irreverence and habits of premature independence are not confined to the male sex. The infection has extended to all the rising generation, and they have actually crowded their seniors out of society, and taken exclusive possession of the pleasant places of life. The result is, that society is not only not enjoyed, but is absolutely unknown. For that surely ought not to be dignified by the name of society, where a company of boys and misses get together to romp, and giggle, and eat sweetmeats. Society is a noble or a mean word, according to what it is made to signify. It is a noble word, one of the noblest, where it is applied to an assemblage of the mature, the cultivated, the refined, the courteous, come together to look on what is most pleasing and dignified in human life, to interchange opinions, feelings, and sentiments, to receive and communicate pleasure and information. This is society, and next to the more sacred and tranquil pleasures of home, it is the noblest and purest enjoyment. It is a balm to the spirits lacerated and exhausted by the fatigues of study or business. It promotes that friendliness and good will

among men, which if not identical with the Christian religion, is in unison with it. But from such society we are in a great measure debarred by the premature pretensions of those, who had better be conning their lessons, and completing their education.

This precocious independence of the young, finds its cause but not its excuse, in the peculiarities of our condition and institutions. In the old world, population is dense and disproportioned to employment, and the means of support. The young therefore remain longer under the paternal roof, are longer dependent on their parents for support and of course are more absolutely subjected to their authority. There, wages are low, and of course the labor of all who are old enough to work is required to obtain a support. The independence which is here assumed by the young, would there be an utter astonishment.

Here the state of things is reversed. The resources of nature are not half exhausted by the population. The means of all classes are more ample, and the young are not compelled immediately to earn their bread, or if they choose to do so they may soon support themselves by their own independent exertions. They are therefore less subject to any restraint whatever.

Besides this, we live under a Republican government, which is an attempt to live as far as possible without any government whatever. The Republican

feeling has extended itself down to the very children, so that the family circle has become revolutionized from a monarchy to a little democracy, levelling age, sex and condition. This Republicanism has on the whole borne noble fruit. It has produced an irrepressible energy and enterprise of character, which have carried this country forward on the march of improvement, at a rate of rapidity never before witnessed. But it has likewise developed its evils, and among them the early abandonment of the young to follow the bent of their own inclinations. The consequence is, that thousands yearly go wrong from this cause alone, and swell the catalogue of crimes and atrocities such as no civilized nation ever exhibited to the world.

The young man therefore, in this country, is earlier left his own master and thrown upon his own responsibility. If boys must become citizens, then they must be citizens and not boys, assume the steadiness, the self control and the sobriety of men.

In speaking of the duties we owe society, and the sins we may commit against it, I cannot forbear to advert to the disposition to candour, liberality and tolerance in judging of the opinions and sentiments of others, and to warn you against the opposite spirit, that of dogmatism, uncharitableness and self-sufficiency. This is a most uncomfortable fault to which all are liable, but especially the young. Their own

opinions are most of them derived from tradition, not examination. They are therefore implicit and undoubted. Having never examined, they suppose that their opinions are thus and so, because the thing is so. Having never investigated the grounds of their own sentiments, they are ignorant of the reasons there may be against them as well as for them. They are equally ignorant of the reasons there may be for the opposite. Setting up their own opinions as truth, all others of course seem heresy. They are ignorant of the great fact that we live in a world of probabilities, not of certainties. It is impossible then or any human being to be infallibly sure that he is right on any subject, beyond the narrow limits of the senses, of consciousness and of memory. This being the case, it requires a great deal of principle, a great deal of fairness, and a great deal of good feeling to behave right under it.

A man is tempted, especially when he comes in contact with one not quite so acute or quite so well informed as himself, to make up by dogmatism, positiveness, and pertinacity, what he wants in certainty, and lacks in good arguments. Such conduct as this, is a species of social immorality, besides being unfair and ungenerous. The effect of it is to impair the pleasures and the benefits of society, and injure the cause of truth, which ought to be more precious than any temporary or personal triumph. No one was

ever convinced by such means, and cannot but feel oppressed and ill used. Difference of opinion in such cases, instead of shedding any light on either mind, is converted into alienation of personal feeling, the worst possible result of social intercourse.

As we are to be surrounded all our days with those who differ from us in opinion, and as the hope cannot be cherished of bringing all to think as we do, it must be a principal part of the art of living happily with those about us, to differ from them in peace and mutual good will.

All sincere opinions are to be treated with respect. This is justice as well as wisdom. The natural bias of our mind is to agree in sentiment with those about us. If another differs from us, then we have every reason to believe that it is from sincere conviction. It is unjust in us then, to attribute any opinion to obstinacy or stupidity. The instant we do so, we not only insult a fellow being, but we lay ourselves open to the same unhandsome treatment in return.

The fact is, that truth is infinite. No human mind has ever seen the whole of it. It is not confined to any set of opinions, but is scattered in fragments through all. If it were not so, there could not be such a variety of opinions. Falsehood is not congenial with the human mind, and no man willingly embraces it. Numbers have nothing to do with the thing, for the time has been when the most important truths,

which are now universally acknowledged, were held by a few, and those few were ridiculed and persecuted by the majority. Galileo was obliged to confess, amid the scorn and insults of the world, that the earth does not move on its axis. Now he who asserts the doctrine, which he was obliged to confess true, would be equally ridiculed by all intelligent men. Nothing then can show a meaner mind, than to attempt to oppress or ill treat another on account of his opinions, or to diminish at all that respect, which his talents, his character and acquirements justly challenge at our hands. To overcome this narrowness and prejudice, with which we are all more or less educated, I cannot but recommend to you to **associate freely** with all sects, opinions and parties. It is the interest of partizans to inflame prejudice, that parties may be disciplined and kept together. But it is your interest to know and appreciate and esteem, all good men of all names and all parties. At a distance, we are too apt to think that those who differ from us have scarcely the attributes of humanity. When brought into contact, we are surprised that the peculiarities of their opinions are as the small dust of the balance, when compared with the great and universal attributes of human nature, and we are surprised to find that the very person, whose strange opinions seemed to isolate him from any connexion with his species, is after all very much such a being as we ourselves. The more

we associate with mankind the more we shall be convinced that speculative opinions have very little influence upon the character, and have little power to modify individual disposition. There are good and honest men of all parties and opinions, and there are bad men of all parties and opinions. There is more reason to esteem the truly excellent of differing opinions, than the undeserving of our own party. We do nothing more or less than, than commit a stupendous fraud on our own happiness, when we suffer the prejudices of party or opinion to alienate us from the friendship and society of one human being, whose moral qualities entitle him to our esteem, our confidence and affection.

LECTURE V.

ON THE CONDUCT OF LIFE.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN,

THE subject of the present lecture is so deeply important, and demands so much wisdom and discretion in its treatment, that I approach it with the greatest diffidence. I would gladly have passed it over altogether, if I could have done so with any justice to the general topics I have undertaken to treat. That subject is the relations of the sexes, the duties and the happiness which spring out of them, and the vices, the crimes, and the unutterable misery to which they may give rise. As the relation between the sexes is the most fundamental and important that we sustain, and the trials and temptations to which it leads, assail human nature in its weakest point, so ought it to be most thoroughly comprehended in all its bearings, that the young man in addition to the promptings and restraints of religious principles, may have in full view the tremendous responsibilities upon which he acts in all his intercourse with the other sex.

God has legislated upon this subject in a manner more minute and emphatic than perhaps on any other whatever. All the statute books of human invention, and even the Bible itself, give but an imperfect sketch of the actual law, the rewards and punishments which God has annexed to faithfulness or unfaithfulness to the mutual obligations which the sexes owe to each other. This great law is clearly written in the constitution and condition of man, in his affections, his wants, his moral and religious nature.

Next to the wonders of our individual being, the marvellous organization of the body, and the still more marvellous faculties of the mind, comes the difference of sexes. On this difference leading to marriage, the whole fabric of society rests. The family is the primary element from which all society proceeds. As the fountain is pure, so will be the streams which issue from it. Every thing in society points backwards and forwards to marriage as the most sacred of relations, and this very fact, antecedent to all experience upon the subject, would lead us to consider any deviation from the Divine institute the most criminal of acts, and the most widely pernicious in its consequences.

Simultaneously with the development of those physical and intellectual powers, which enable man to provide for his own wants, there springs up in his mind a corresponding sentiment, the desire of inde-

pendence. The full development of the powers, which constitute humanity, emancipates him from parental control, and impels him to go forth to seek his own fortune and found a new community. At the same time that the childish feeling of attachment to the original circle declines, he finds that another set of feelings begins to spring up, delight in the society of the young and beautiful of the other sex. This change of feeling, as if in augury of the charm which it is kindly designed to spread over the whole of existence, already begins to exert a softening and refining influence upon the whole character and deportment. The manner of the rude, impetuous boy is changed into dignity, gentleness, decorum. The world begins to contain something better than tops, and marbles, and play grounds. There begins to spread over it the roseate hue of sentiment and feeling. He becomes more thoughtful, meditative, and retiring. Nature has for him more exquisite charms than it ever possessed before. He takes more intense delight in poetry and works of imagination. But these things instead of making him effeminate and weak, beguile the weariness of toil, and nerve him to great and noble enterprises. The prospect of life becomes more interesting from the anticipation of sharing its pleasures with another. The imagination in picturing the future, after wandering over the vast field of possibilities, of schemes, labors and hopes,

never fails to finish the picture with the idea of the future home, shared by some bright being, the concentration of every excellence and perfection. These anticipations exert a most powerful influence over the forming character. They tend to confirm and consolidate it. They lead to the formation of wise and worthy designs, and the steady and patient pursuit of them through good and through ill. They induce the desire of personal cultivation and improvement, and many a young man has become studious, courteous, affable and agreeable, to commend himself to the other sex, who for his own individual benefit would have suffered his time to pass idly away and his powers to run to waste. Thus it is, that the elements of virtuous love are made use of by God, long before they lead to the formation of the conjugal tie, to exert the very best influence upon the character. It leads the young man to toil early and late, it makes him prudent in his expenditures, temperate and moderate in his pleasures, draws him to the society of the accomplished and the virtuous of the other sex, and give him a distaste to all low and vicious associations. To those, who cherish these refined and honorable sentiments, the years, which elapse between maturity and marriage, pass most agreeably away. The dew of youth and hope lies freshly on all things, the feelings enter readily into each gay and joyful scene. Symmetry and beauty are at their acme, and the assemblages of

the youthful and the happy met to reciprocate the smile of gladness, to echo the tone of joy, are permitted to steal a few hours in this sad and sombre world as near to perfect enjoyment, as it is allowed to mortals to taste below.

But the heart is not made to be satisfied with this general society of the other sex. It soon finds itself drawn to one, by a mysterious but irresistible attraction. That mysterious attraction and incipient attachment, seem as nearly Providential as any thing which takes place by human agency. It springs up unbidden, or it springs not at all. Pure and spontaneous love is always unforeseen, always perfectly disinterested. Reason may suggest the propriety of an attachment, interest may ardently desire it, management may bring the parties together with all possible address, but it is all to no purpose. There must be a spontaneous preference on account of some peculiarities of taste or temperament, which no arrangement of outward circumstances can bring about.

That this attachment is intended to be the deepest, most sacred and permanent, is indicated by the deep hold it takes upon the whole nature. It is not a thing which a man can put on and off and trifle with as he pleases. The roughest nature is subdued to gentleness, the most trifling becomes serious, the most sarcastic and untameable are reduced to sighs and tears. The sacred image of all imaginable perfections is ever

present, and the skies lose their loftiness, the sun its brightness, and nature its charms, in the enterprise of possessing the original. Now although this great event of life is made the object of jest, and witticism, and ridicule, it is a great psychological fact, and it is sacred and venerable notwithstanding the volumes of disgusting and mawkish drivelling which have been written about it. The powerful emotions, which at the season of forming a virtuous attachment, stir up the whole soul, the marked change which then takes place in the whole demeanor, declares as plainly as language could do, that the union which is taking place, is the most important event in life, and should remain as permanent as life itself.

It usually takes place at that period of life when manhood is in its prime, and woman most lovely. The union of two true hearts is a scene which Art decorates with the most splendid and imposing works of her hands, innocent curiosity flocks to it as a marvel and a show, the moral sentiments of mankind sanction it, religion blesses it, Christ himself once hallowed it with his presence, and God adds to it the choicest smiles of his providence.

With those, who are thus happily united, life starts afresh under new and happier auspices. Existence seems more full and rich now it is shared with another with whom sympathy is complete, and in whom confidence is unbounded. New and more generous

motives of action are substituted in the place of that exclusive reference to self, into which a single life is too apt to contract. Time passes unheeded and unregretted by, as lapse of duration has no reference to the soul, or to its best affections. Prosperity comes and is doubly welcome, because its joyousness is reflected from the sympathy of another. Adversity comes, and its sharpness is mitigated by the mutual support, which faithful hearts are able to impart to each other. As they advance in life, and take a less vivid interest in its affairs, a new generation comes forward under the most propitious auspices. Their education is likely to be cared for, their morals watched over and the example they witness at home, trains them up to all that is good. And then as the parents decline in years, they reap the reward of their fidelity in the affection, the tenderness and assiduity of their children. Decay and death shall seem to them less terrible, as their aged steps shall be supported, and their dying eyes closed by the hands of filial affection.

Such is the career and such are the rewards of honorable love, and that connexion of the sexes, which is hallowed by the laws of God and man. It is no fiction, no picture of the imagination. It is often witnessed in life. None who hear me will need to go far among their acquaintance to find an original. Most beautifully was all this description realized, and

more than realized in the life lately published to the world of Walter Scott, the transcendent genius, the most excellent man. No one can read his life, and compare it with his wonderful productions, without being impressed with the conviction that he owed much of that healthful, happy and buoyant tone of mind and those cheerful views of life, which characterize his enchanting tales to the benign influence shed over his whole nature by those conjugal affections so tender and so true, which blessed his matrimonial connexion.

Such are the blessings which in the order of Providence, attend those, who observe the great moral laws which govern the relation of the sexes to each other.

It is now my duty to reverse the picture, and exhibit the degradation, the misery and the ruin, which follow and overtake the violators of those laws, the severe retribution which even in this life, punishes the reckless libertine. The first symptom which is exhibited, of this fatal declension from all good, is a fondness for low company. But in order that low company should be sought and delighted in, there must have been committed the original sin of a voluntary defilement of the thoughts and imagination.

There is a profane and immodest curiosity, a prying into the animal economy, that seeks its gratifications in obscene books or impure descriptions, which is itself polluting and defiling to the soul. And here

let me say to every young person, if there is any salvation from this vortex of perdition, the stand is to be made in the heart, the thoughts, the fountain of all action. But if the stand be not made, the next stage toward ruin, is delight in the society of the coarse, the obscene and licentious in conversation. By association with such, the natural modesty of youth becomes gradually soiled, the sacred charm of moral association, which invests woman to an unsophisticated mind with an inviolable sacredness, is slowly dispelled. The ideas of protection and respect, which an honorable mind connects with the weaker and dependent sex, and those higher and better ties which ought to bind them to the other, are lost sight of, and the soul gradually descends so low as to consider them merely as the victims and the instruments of a base, brutal sensuality.

When the train is thus laid, nothing is now wanting but opportunity, to complete that moral prostration for which the mind is so well prepared. Under the guidance of some of the emissaries of hell, the young man crosses the threshold of that house whose doors are the passage-way to moral death, and his fate is sealed. If there were any sympathies in Nature, such as are fabled to have spoken out when man committed the first sin, at that fatal moment there would be heard a deep and universal groan.

From that hour what a difference in the feelings,

the condition and the prospects of a young man! He himself is not aware of a hundredth part of the change and degradation which has taken place within him. He perhaps under the excitement of new scenes, and the intoxication of animal pleasure, may revel for a while in a kind of bewilderment, and set all evil consequences at defiance. But it is all madness and delusion. A most awful change has taken place in himself. The ingenuous confidence of innocence is lost. He cannot any longer approach with bounding step and buoyant heart the sacred precincts of home. The presence of father and mother, hitherto full of peace, comfort and encouragement, seems polluted and insulted by his intrusion. In all his communications with them hitherto so frank and confiding, there is something now kept back, which clouds his intercourse with them with constraint and disquiet. In the family circle, in the place of that open, ingenuous, cheerful, sportive demeanour, which is native to innocence and pure thoughts, there come a sullenness, reserve and irritability which begin to isolate him from those affections, that used to be his solace and delight. The society of the virtuous and refined of the other sex gradually loses its charm. In their presence he feels himself rebuked, awkward, and ill at ease. Every pure and elevated sentiment is to him a reproof, every act of confidence a reproach. Quite as uneasy does he find himself in his new position in

the world. The shame of his fall is no secret, and it is in the hands of those, who are restrained by no principle of honor or delicacy from its promulgation, and who would at any moment make it known to serve any purpose of cupidity or revenge. Besides, if the secret is kept, he cannot know that it is, and a guilty conscience ever apprehensive and stimulating the imagination to the greatest extravagances, leads him to read detection and scorn in every eye. The very street is no longer the same. No where does he feel safe from betrayal and disgrace. The terrible penalty of fear and anticipated mortification is never long absent from his mind, and O! how much do even these overbalance any possible gratification, which can be derived from the society of the abandoned and the vile.

It is astonishing what a wreck, habits of licentiousness make of all that is good, even in respects which we should not at first anticipate. It not only prostrates principle, but it undermines the habits of industry and application to business. The predisposition to form a virtuous connexion for life, and even the grosser passion, which for wise reasons God has made strong in a pure and virtuous mind, operates as a stimulus to endeavour, a motive to industry, probity, and perseverance. But the desecration of a sacred affection, the gratification of animal appetite without those responsibilities, which God intended should accompany it, deranges the whole course of nature,

and breaks up one of Heaven's wisest and most beneficent arrangements. The great purpose of marriage and domestic happiness is rendered indifferent, and of course in the same proportion those habits of industry, probity, and economy, which are necessary to prepare for it. Instead of long and honorable plans for the future, which are the great props and buttresses of character, the young man becomes remiss and unstable. His visions of the honorable citizen, husband, father are gradually abandoned and that course of noble exertion which belongs to such anticipations, and in their place is substituted the mean and selfish man of pleasure, contented for a few years to expend the avails of his industry upon the mere gratification of the basest of passions.

Another evil which the incipient sensualist did not anticipate soon overtakes him, an utter repugnance to every thing of a religious nature. Nothing so unhal- lows and pollutes the soul and all its thoughts as this vice. It stops the breath of prayer, closes the pages of divine revelation, makes the sabbath irksome, and renders public worship a penance instead of an enjoyment. It follows, that there can be scarcely a worse sign than to see a young man fall off from religious observances. It is almost certain that sin lieth at the door.

But his repugnance to religion does not often stop at neglect. It usually goes on to a secret enmity and scorn, thence to profane jests and open unbelief. The

loss of the religious principle in man, slight as it may be in some, is an awful and fatal loss. When it is gone there is no longer any safety. A man becomes his own greatest enemy. It is plainly the conservative principle within him, like the compass to the ship in the midst of the ocean. Throw that overboard and he is lost. He drifts on and on, without any other certainty than that of a final shipwreck.

Habits of vicious indulgence are never stationary, and this especially, being accompanied with an extinction of the religious principle, rapidly prostrates in a man all that is good. Association with the vile, and that infatuation which attends it, induces habits of prodigality which must be supplied, honestly if it may be, but dishonestly if it must. When he has spent every thing of his own, he appropriates whatever he can lay his hands on, come from whence it may. When he has advanced to this point of his career, general vagabondism is not far off, and the blighted young man either sinks into the grave, becomes the tenant of the penitentiary, or drags out a miserable existence in the most degrading employments.

Another, whose standing in society is more elevated, and whose means of dissipation are not so soon exhausted, is preserved only for the commission of worse crimes, and the endurance of a more signal retribution. Sensuality has so polluted his imagination that he can think of nothing else. Beauty, ignorance

and dependence no sooner catch his eye than the imagination is fired, and with black and guileful heart he busies himself with schemes of seduction and ruin. Where in the catalogue of depravity shall we place such a miscreant as this? The soul of the murderer, who stabs in hot blood, is white when compared to his. He despatches his victim at once, and with little suffering, and perhaps with no preconceived malice. But here is a man, who without provocation, will plot for weeks and months the murder of body and soul, the shame of whole families, and the abiding sorrow of the most virtuous affections. The unfeeling wretch is perfectly aware what he is doing at every step. He knows the fate of his victim, for he has seen hundreds of these deluded creatures cast out from all the endearments of natural affection, from the peace and protection of home, abandoned to the insults of the brutal and the drunken, the prey of remorse, of want, of disease and premature decay. And yet in full sight of all this, the seducer proceeds deliberately, step by step, by arts the most mean, by flattery the most contemptible, by perjury the most profligate.

What renders this sin more deep and damning, is the fact, that seduction is not often accomplished without a base and treacherous use of the holiest of affections, that which was originally intended to unite the sexes for life. Man is led into unlawful connex-

ions by lust, woman only by love. The greater freedom, or more lax morality of the male sex, permits them to associate the idea of the gratification of animal passion with looser ties, the native delicacy of the female mind only with the permanent and virtuous relation of marriage. The seducer therefore, does not hesitate to excite this virtuous passion. He makes his advances under the traitorous mask of honourable love. And where woman once gives her heart, her unlimited confidence goes with it. She would as soon distrust her Maker as believe that the idol she has enthroned in her affections would deceive, betray and abandon her. On the one side then, all is devoted and sincere attachment. On the other, the most cold-blooded, dastardly selfishness and treachery. The injured creature awakens to her situation and finds herself ruined, heart-broken, forsaken and she shrinks into the companionship of the loathsome and the vile.

Is there one feeling of truth, honor, and humanity, that does not rise up within you at the fiendishness of such conduct? And yet there are men, who deem themselves men of honor, and claim a reception into the society of the pure and the virtuous, who have no scruples to make seduction, I had almost said, the business of their lives. It is in this way, by this system of moral murder, that the number of those outcasts of society is kept up, which themselves once corrupted, become the source of corruption to the

whole community. And is it possible that any human being can treat this subject lightly, and make the fall and ruin of the young and the innocent the subject of jest and ridicule? The time is not far distant, I believe, when the moral feeling of the community will rise in its might, and crush the perpetrators of this stupendous wrong.

But whatever may be thought of this crime among men, there is an awful vengeance hanging over it in the Providence of God. In the breast of the seducer, however smooth his brow, courageous his mien, or careless his demeanour, there are already lighted the fires of hell. There are certain moral, psychological and physiological causes, which sooner or later avenge the cause of the ruined and betrayed in a manner most fearful to contemplate. No man can commit this crime without being fully aware of its turpitude in the sight of God and man. No man, who is not a brute, can prevent something like real attachment from weaving itself into the endearments of even a base and treacherous connexion with the beautiful, the innocent, the devoted. The highest pleasures thus become associated in the mind with the deepest guilt, and to all time therefore this crime takes not the place of an ordinary transaction to be soon consigned to oblivion, but stands out in bold and prominent relief, always to catch the eye in the retrospect of the past. The whole thing by the violence of passion,

and the intense consciousness of guilt, is burnt into the soul as it were with letters of fire, and as far as we can see, it remains there painfully legible forever. The seducer is haunted by it to the day of his death. The thought will steal over him wherever he may be, what may now be the condition of that injured, ruined being, whom he once took to his brutal and polluting embraces? Imagination will paint her reduced to the last extremity of wretchedness and woe, surrounded by the degraded and abandoned, the sunny smile of innocence and youth supplanted by the worn and haggard look of despair. This image will float before his mind in broad day, in health and prosperity. But let trouble or disease shatter his nerves, and wreck his constitution, and he can think of nothing else, he is racked by perpetual remorse. He cannot close his eyes in slumber before his mental vision is invaded by the apparitions of his victims, reproaching him with all the tones and looks of anguish, for their betrayal and ruin. These scourges of guilt, which from the laws of nature I have mentioned, recoil upon the base seducer, human nature cannot long endure, and the resort to drown memory and reflection is almost universally to intoxication. In nine cases out of ten, libertinism ends in habitual drunkenness. When you see a young man giving himself up to licentious courses, though then he may have no inclination to strong drink, you may be morally sure that if you meet the

same person five or ten years afterwards, his breath will reek of the strongest potations of the still-house and his whole constitution seem eaten out by their fiery and fatal poison.

It is a singular fact, that in a large proportion of the confessions of condemned criminals you will find in the catalogue of crimes which brought them to the gallows, that seduction was one. And the vile associations to which it led, were the principal causes of a final and total abandonment to vicious courses.

Another course, which this vice sometimes takes, among the more opulent classes, puts on for a while a less atrocious aspect, but finally terminates in results even more unhappy and disastrous to society. It is that of a temporary connexion, involving support on the one hand and ostensible fidelity on the other. The young man may flatter himself, that such a course of conduct may screen him from the more immediate mischiefs of promiscuous libertinism. But he is only led into a more fatal snare, to be overtaken by a more tremendous retribution. The consciousness of this state of things generally drives a man from virtuous society, or its publicity makes his intercourse with it uncomfortable and embarrassing. His inclination to honorable marriage is sapped and destroyed, and generally the opportunity of a happy choice.

In the mean time he finds himself a husband without any of the respectability, the security and the

happiness of one, and the father of nameless heirs of ignominy and shame. What earthly condition can be more miserable than this? How could a man, even if he went deliberately about it, involve himself more inextricably in disgrace, remorse and wretchedness, for the rest of his life? How must that man feel, who is conscious, that his own offspring are wandering about the earth the outcasts of society, and the scorn of the world? The most affecting thing, I think, that I have ever met with in my life, was a letter which I once found in looking over the papers of a deceased person, written by an illegitimate son to his father, whom he had never seen, and who, though surrounded by wealth, never made the least provision for his support or education, or even recognised his existence. He seemed to be a young man of good talents and the most delicate sensibility, but crushed and blighted by the consciousness of his dishonorable birth. His mother, many years before, had abandoned him for a life of infamy, and he was left without friend or protector, to drag out a miserable existence and to suffer the innocent for the guilty, the stern punishment of his parents' sins. The touching tones of sorrow and despair, with which he appealed to the heart of a father, filled me for a time with the profoundest melancholy, and led me to reflect on the enormous guilt of a libertine with a deeper horror than I had ever felt before.

On the whole, the crimes of libertinism take a deeper hold on the conscience than any other except that of murder. I have sat by the side of many a death-bed and marked the sins which wring the departing soul with the deepest pang; and I can sincerely say that there is no sin, which so clings to the conscience, which so casts doubt on the possibility of the Divine mercy, which throws such gloomy fears on the unknown futurity the trembling soul is about to enter, as the criminal indulgence of the baser passions.

I have cited the example of an eminent literary man as exhibiting the happy influence of virtuous love. There is another no less distinguished, who has afforded as impressive a warning to the world of the wretchedness which accompanies libertinism. Much of the misanthropy, the bitterness, the blasphemy and despair which pollute the otherwise exquisite poetry of Byron, is to be traced I have not the least doubt, to the subtle poison of a licentious life. When this sacred tie, which is intended to bind us more closely than any other to our species, has been vitiated, it cannot fail to destroy the harmony of feeling with mankind, which is so necessary to mental peace and satisfaction. His case too is a demonstration of a truth which ought to be impressed on the mind of every young man, that marriage is not a cure for the moral disorders introduced by licentiousness. There is

more probability that instead of being cured, they will utterly destroy the happiness of that connexion. That freshness and singleness of affection, which alone can meet and satisfy the devotedness of woman's heart, can never be found in the breast of a libertine. There was nothing casual or accidental in the relation in which Byron found himself with regard to his wife, soon after their marriage. It is the natural condition of a libertine in a state of marriage. In his case it became known, merely because he was a public character. The results in all cases are more or less the same. Unhappiness in this relation is enough to blast the prospects of life, and send a man forth to wander upon the face of the earth. His feverish restlessness, his gloomy skepticism, his heartless contempt for his species, were the natural consequences of the life he led. And the unblushing confession, that he wrote in the latter part of his life on the inspiration of gin, only confirms the observation I have already made, that the latter stages of the rake's progress are passed under the maddening influence of intoxication.

Such are some of the tremendous penalties, which in the order of nature and of Providence, hang over and avenge the licentious intercourse of the sexes. They are as sure to follow as day to follow night, and nothing but a miracle on the part of God changing the course of causes and effects, could avert them. There is then but one way for the young man to act,

in that alone lies his salvation, to shun as a pestilence the society of all who are in the habitual practice of this vice, or whose conversation is loose, or who have a prevailing taste for indecency of any kind whatever. There is no other way but to repress that immodest curiosity which would find its gratification in the perusal of indecent books, to restrain the lawless imagination, which is stimulated by licentious songs and conversation. Let him remember that it is comparatively easy to resist the beginnings of evil, that self-government belongs mainly to the thoughts. While they are kept pure there is safety. But evil once admitted here, is like a kindling fire, which spreads and rages till every thing is involved in conflagration.

Above all, let no enticement or persuasion ever induce you to approach the threshold of those haunts of perdition. Let the degradation, the cruelties, the blasphemies, the riots, the filthiness of those sinks of pollution be as repugnant to your curiosity as the awful mysteries of the prison house of the damned.

LECTURE VI.

ON THE CONDUCT OF LIFE.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN,

As this lecture completes our course, it will be necessary to crowd what more I have to say into a small compass; and as it is impossible even to touch on many topics relating to the conduct of life upon which I would gladly have addressed you, I have concluded to select two of the principal vices to which young men are exposed, and by exhibiting to your attention their beginning, their progress and their end, arm you against their temptations, and put you on your guard against their insidious approaches. These vices are *Intemperance* and *Gaming*. Few are fully aware of the enormous evils inflicted on society by these two vices. Few are aware of the amount of suffering endured by the innocent and unoffending, in consequence of these two fatal habits incurred at first without much guilt, but involving in their progress the commission of almost every crime.

Intemperance is at this moment the master sin of the civilized world. Imagination cannot paint the miseries which flow from this vice. There is a multitude which no man can number, at this moment filling their homes with horror, beggaring their families, and themselves sinking into a premature decay. Such is the prevalence of this vice, that when you look on a group of boys engaged in their sports, you can prophesy without apprehension of mistake, that one in four will shorten his life by habits of intemperance.

The world is not yet sufficiently awake to the enormity of the evils which it suffers from this source. With all the efforts of temperance societies, and the exertions of individuals, many years will elapse before public opinion will sanction and enforce those municipal laws which might contribute greatly to its suppression. As long as poisons are suffered publicly to be retailed to all who choose to buy, as long as it shall be suffered to be the interests of one man that his neighbors shall all be sots, so long as it is thought a proof of good fellowship to offer your friend a drug which may beguile him of his reason and his life, so long as there is a shop to sell perdition at every corner, our firesides will be desolated, our streets will be polluted, our poor-houses filled with the victims of intemperance. The only thing that is left to be done for the safety of the young is to warn

them each and individually of the dangers which perpetually beset them, to show them the nature and causes of this vice, and the means by which the temperate and the virtuous are gradually ensnared and at last overwhelmed and lost in its fatal gulf.

There is perhaps no subject so vital to human happiness and safety so little understood, as the nature and causes of intemperance. It is thought to be a bad habit, which a man deliberately or capriciously takes up, and continues as long as he pleases, and then has the option to lay it down as easily as he changes his place of business, or removes from house to house. Men form the habit of drinking without comprehending a hundredth part of the risk they run.

Intemperance is a physical and a moral disease, which fastens on the system and prostrates body and mind. It cannot be cured by simple volition, nor in any other way than by long continued regimen, discipline and care.

All intoxicating drinks are poisons, whence they derive their name. When taken into the stomach they remain there undigested, and irritate and inflame its coats, till they are absorbed unchanged into the vascular system, to derange and set on fire the whole course of nature. By their action on the nerves, they stimulate the brain, excite the imagination and rouse all the passions, but unfortunately in the same measure, obscure the reason and bewilder the judgment.

But the outward manifestations of drunkenness are too well known to need description. Its physical effects are known only to the physician and the physiologist.

The exaltation of the spirits soon passes away, and is followed by a corresponding depression. The drunkard the next day after a debauch, is of all miserable beings the most miserable. There follow remorse, depression of spirits and great irritability of temper; physically, languor, thirst and a general uneasiness. Now consider the vast amount of misery, which is involved in these consequences. The man who has the habit of intoxication fastened upon him, cannot but feel guilty and humiliated in the sight of God. Man always feels the dignity of his nature, that he is created in his Maker's image. The drunkard feels his sacred soul unhallowed, when he reflects that his reason has reeled beneath the excitement of strong drink, and the body, that most curious of all created things, has been polluted by beastly intoxication. In the sight of man, he feels that his honor is gone and he is looked upon with a secret contempt, which he is often not at a loss to discover. These causes alone would be sufficient to destroy that hilarity and buoyancy of spirits, which is natural to us in health, and fill the mind with melancholy and gloom. But mental causes do not operate alone in this direction. It is a physiological fact that any derangement of the digestive organs produces to the same extent

dejection of mind. The immediate effect of the administration of alcohol, is to produce gastric derangement accompanied by thirst. Consider then what an accumulation of inducements there is to repeat the intoxicating draught. It cures temporarily a multitude of the most oppressive evils. It drowns for a time the reproaches of conscience. It mitigates the sense of shame. It raises the spirits to their accustomed level, and repairs with a deceitful and evanescent strength that energy which intemperance soon destroys.

When we take these moral and physiological facts into view, the wonder ceases that there are so many drunkards in a community where this ensnaring poison is in common use, and another wonder commences, why there are no more. It is a proof of the benignant care of Providence over us, that the constitution has such a strong tendency to throw off disease and that the moral sense so generally shrinks back from the degradation of habitual intoxication.

What renders this subject more especially interesting to the young, is the fact that this vice, if contracted at all, is usually contracted in early life, in comparative innocence and without the least foresight of the evils to which it inevitably leads. It usually has its origin in two wants of our nature, both natural and both perfectly innocent, the desire of society and the desire of excitement. These are two con-

stituent elements of our nature, designed to promote our individual and social happiness and improvement. We are made to delight in the company and conversation of our fellow beings, particularly with those of the same age or pursuit. Hence it is, that the boy and youth are seen to rush from home whenever they can escape parental control and form groups on the play-grounds and at the corners of the streets. Society, either for good or for evil, the young will have. But how shall they entertain themselves and each other? Stories, jokes and fun are soon exhausted. Excitement must be kept up and so they think it manly and spirited, to adjourn to some neighbouring bar-room or tippling shop and get something to drink. Beware! young man. This is the moment for the resistance of temptation; here the first steps are taken in that downward path, which leads by a more and more rapid descent to the precipice of perdition. The first indulgence is generally entirely indifferent. To abstain from it requires little or no effort. Then is the time for the effort to be made. If it is not made, a few instances of indulgence begin to beget a taste, to form a habit, to induce a disease, to impair the moral sense and then the young man is ruined even in the morning of life. He is wrecked before he has parted from the shore.

This universal element of our nature, the desire of society and excitement, requires a deeper investiga-

tion and a more careful regulation than has hitherto been given to it, on account of its influence upon the condition of public morals. It may be laid down as a maxim, that it will have its gratification in one way or another. Pass through a country village and you will usually see collected about the stores or taverns, a group of men and boys in the various stages from simple idleness to downright vagabondism! What brought them there and what has brought them there every day for the last ten years? Had they any deliberate design to become tipplers and vagabonds? Was it the love of strong drink that brought them there? By no means. It was the desire of society, excitement and entertainment. Their own homes gave them little of either. They had no books and no education to appreciate them, if they had any. They of course could have no very interesting or instructive conversation. They went to the store or tavern to fill up an almost entire vacuity of mind, to hear the news, to see the stage-coach pass, or the mail arrive, or to stare at whatever strangers might there be seen. Now, to cure this evil, all municipal arrangements, and legal enactments are vain and powerless. They do not touch the cause. Until some better provision is made for education, some better scope given for the desire of society and entertainment, there will be no cure for intemperance.

The young man's fate depends entirely on the man-

ner in which he treats these two desires, the desire of society and of excitement; in other words, on the manner in which he chooses to spend his leisure moments. When his time hangs heavy, if he has cultivated a literary taste, so that his hours pass happily with a book, he is safe and in the way of substantial improvement. If when weary of that, he seeks the firesides of the most agreeable and intelligent of his acquaintance, or even the common party of pleasure, still he is safe. But if he bends his steps to the bar-room, or the oyster house, he is at once in the greatest peril. A habit is beginning to form, that of resorting to a dangerous place and there is no possibility of foreseeing where it will end.

It is important to observe, in connexion with this craving for excitement, which I have noticed, as one of the most powerful elements of our nature, that those, who are engaged in active business and have its risks and anxieties always pressing on their minds, are in much less danger of falling into habits of intemperance than the mere irresponsible operatives whom they employ. They have excitement enough in their business, and always feel the necessity of having a clear head and a cool judgment. The mere clerk, or apprentice, or journeyman, shares nothing of that agreeable exhilaration of spirits, that kindling of hope, that interest in life, which his principal enjoys. His labors are a monotonous, mechanical,

daily task, affording no scope for the play of the intellect or the passions. His life therefore is a stagnant level, the most uninspiring that can be imagined. Besides, the clerk, the journeyman, and apprentice are usually single men. They have no family, no fireside to receive and solace them after the fatigues of business. Where shall they go? They will usually seek the society of each other, and endeavor to enliven their meetings with the artificial stimulus of intoxicating drinks. In this way hundreds are yearly drawn into the snare of habitual drunkenness.

Another cause, which operates in maturer life to produce habits of intemperance, is disappointment in business, or the blighting of hope. This is a changing world, and we are all liable to reverses. Indeed, in a community so active and enterprising as ours, under a government whose policy varies with every caprice of the popular will, few men of business sail long upon a smooth sea, and many are reduced to absolute want in the course of an ordinary life. Then comes a tremendous revulsion of feeling, and the mortification of discomfiture and the real difficulties which are interposed in the way of a man of broken fortunes, whatever attempts he may make to retrieve his condition, are enough to appal the stoutest heart. It requires all the energies of the strongest mind to breast the evils of such a condition, to spin again the broken web of hope, to form and pursue a new plan

of life. In too many cases the effort proves too great, and the soul instead of reacting under calamity, sinks into imbecility and despair. The health of the victim of misfortune perhaps suffers, and he flies to some cordial for relief. The relief comes in the soothing, but fatal hallucination of inebriety, and he becomes a wreck in body and soul, as well as in fortune.

Now, it may be asked, in this state of things, what is the young man to do? I answer. The only absolute safety lies in total abstinence. And what a momentous matter absolute safety from intemperate habits is, we have only to look around us to be convinced. What day passes without exhibiting to our notice some disgusting wreck of humanity, reduced below the level of the brutes, by long abuse of a noble nature. There was a time, when that man looked on a habitual drunkard, with as much pity and loathing as we now do on him; and if he could have foreseen his present situation, he would have committed suicide, rather than have fallen into it. And now there are times, when returning reason makes him fully conscious of his situation, that he would gladly put an end to the torments of remorse, by leaping into the gulf of annihilation.

For my own part, I do not look to the system of pledges of total abstinence for the cure of this widespread vice. It does not, I think, comport with the

freedom of our political institutions, nor with that personal and immediate trial and responsibility, which was intended to accompany us through life, and cannot be concentrated upon one moment by any covenant we can make with ourselves or with another. Besides, our children will not be born with temperance oaths in their mouths, and they will do as they please. My hope is mainly in the dissemination of correct physiological knowledge upon the subject, in the general recognition of the fact, that the use of alcohol when the system is in health, is the administration of a poison, more or less pernicious, according to the quantity taken; that the aggregate enjoyment of any forty-eight hours cannot be increased by any artificial stimulus, however little, or however great. My hope is, that the time is not far distant, when the day laborer shall be as well aware of this fact as the physiologist now is, and alcohol in every shape shall be handled with the same caution as other poisonous drugs belonging to the medicine chest.

The only other vice against which I have space to lift up the voice of warning, is that of gaming, a vice to which it must be confessed there is a strong propensity in human nature. All savages are addicted to it almost to madness. It is recorded by Tacitus of our ancestors, in his treatise concerning the manners of the Germans, that nothing could exceed the infatuation with which they pursued this absorbing

amusement. They would stake first their money, then their property, then their clothing, then their own liberty on the turn of the die, and if unfortunate, passively suffer themselves to be bound and carried away into slavery for life. There must be something more awfully infatuating in the vice of gaming than any other, to lead to such results. The danger which accompanies it is proportionally great. The gamester stands hourly on the brink of perdition.

The passion for gaming demands a deeper philosophical analysis than has hitherto been applied to it. Why is it that it is so strong in the human breast? The reason of it I believe to be this. A game of mingled chance and skill, bears the strongest resemblance to human life. God in his wisdom and goodness has adapted the arrangement of the world to the constitution of man, and the various passions and propensities of the human soul to the conditions of human life. He has made our position in this world to depend on a combination of what seems to us chance and skill. Our condition is decided not altogether by chance, for then there would be no scope left for enterprize, endeavor, and hope; nor is it all left to struggle, for then there would be no peace or contentment from the strifes of restlessness and ambition. Therefore it is that life is made to be a combination of chance and skill, that all the passions, hope and fear, ambition and emulation, may be called

into exercise, as well as the active and executive powers. Thus it is, that a game of hazard is a miniature of human life, and excites the same kind of interest; its changes and uncertainty call up the same alternations of hope and fear, of elation and depression. And then bringing into play the master passion of the acquisition of property, which was originally made strong in the human breast, there is a philosophical reason why gaming should be so engrossing and fascinating. Other vices are the sources of constant expense. Gaming is a means of gaining a living. The young beginner is even encouraged in his new occupation by seeing some of his predecessors gaining wealth, and even a species of respect, which this perverted world will always pay to money, even when got by piracy. The snare is so well baited, that it is not at all strange that so many inconsiderate young men are caught in it; and the fascination is so great that few ever reform. The gambler then, when the habit is once formed, is generally lost to society.

Gaming at the beginning, is generally simply a loss of time. The idle want amusement. If there be not sufficient cultivation of mind, or elevation of taste to find pleasure in rational conversation, or in reading, then some game of chance or skill is introduced to kill time. To kill time! What an expression for a human being to use, who in the same breath will be

complaining of the shortness of life! To kill time, while Literature and Science, and Art are pouring forth their treasures, and inviting you to partake, and to be wise and happy!

I cannot but consider it a sign of the advancement of the age, that cards have so generally gone out of use. It is an evidence of the development of mind, and the advancement of taste, that rational beings find something better to do when they come together, than to gaze into a handful of black spots and red. Since I came to years of discretion, I have never seen a party at cards without feeling for them the sincerest pity, or without gratitude for being engaged in a pursuit, which fills up all my time with important and satisfactory employment. The excitement of games of skill and hazard, I believe to be generally feverish and unhealthy, irritating to the mind, and exhausting to the nervous system. All that can be said in favor of them is, that they are better than some things that are worse. But if they are yearly the means of leading thousands to destruction, it were better perhaps if they were not in existence.

Certain it is, that skill acquired in the practice of them as a pastime, is usually the first step to the vice of gaming. The unfledged victim of play, begins with increasing the zest of the game by a small stake. He wins perhaps a considerable sum, which is the very worst thing that could happen to him. This

great sin against the fundamental law of the legitimate acquisition of property by toil, produces in him a corresponding recklessness of possession. He more readily ventures a second time, because he argues that if he loses he is in no worse condition than before. What is improperly obtained, is staked with little regret. When it is gone, he is willing to risk some of his honest possessions, hoping that fortune will again turn in his favor. And now the spirit of the gambler is fully developed. The moral repugnance to the society of the professional gamester gradually wears off, and with a little misgiving he makes the acquaintance of some of the more honorable members of that most worshipful fraternity. By them he is introduced into one of those apartments of perdition, where ruin lies lurking for both soul and substance. At first he is contented with being a mere spectator. He is aware where he is, and what awaits him. But a strange enchantment gradually seizes on all his faculties. A mystic spell comes over him, like that which draws the fluttering bird into the jaws of the serpent. He approaches one of the tables, and the lynx-eyed spoilers at once recognise and seize upon their prey. Like the poor fish, which the angler spies in the stream, he is played around with the tempting bait, till at last he snatches the deadly morsel, and instead of a repast he finds himself bleeding on the bank, and gasping in the agonies of death. At first he has a

most marvellous run of luck, and he imagines himself the most fortunate of men. Money flows in upon him in abundance. The unconscious victim must be fattened before he is devoured. In the meantime he is initiated into all the mysteries of the craft. The choicest delicacies of the market load his board, the richest wines stimulate his appetite. He plunges into all the lawless pleasures that can be purchased with money. But his eager pursuit of pleasure is one of the worst symptoms of his condition. It is a melancholy sign that he is not at peace within. He is after all, a miserable being. He feels himself an outcast. He knows the estimation in which he is held, and he acquiesces in it. He anticipates his final doom, and voluntarily takes the left hand; he condemns himself to the society of the degraded and the lost. Therefore it is, that he seeks to lose himself and the consciousness of his character in the most exciting scenes of riotous pleasure. There is scarcely any vice into which he does not immediately plunge. The only virtue he has left, is generosity. A gambler is generally more free with his money than any one else. This would be a real virtue if he came honestly by it, but he gives to one man what he has taken from another. What then is the life of a gambler? What is he better than the pirate, who robs upon the high seas, who fattens upon the heart's blood of the ruined, the plundered and the lost? As the pirate

banishes himself from all the walks and haunts of men, and lurks in solitudes and caverns, so the gambler is found most to frequent the lowest holes and sinks of depravity. By the continual wear of dissipation, lying, fraud, blasphemy and maddening passion, the human gradually disappears, till there is nothing left but the hideousness of the fiend. He shall never know the blessedness of a home. No rising family shall soothe his cares nor kindle his hopes. No domestic affections shall smooth for him the bed of sickness, nor compose his limbs in their last repose. He shall be carried forth and buried like a beast, and no stone shall mark his dishonored grave.

Beware then, young man, of taking the first steps towards the life of a gambler. It is like the cave of Cacus, strewn with the bones of the plundered and the slain, and like that too the path to it knows "*nulla vestigia retrorsum.*" No one returns to tell the tale. But while it is so dangerous, no vice is more easy to avoid. Touch not, taste not, handle not, and you are safe. In this enlightened age, where there is so much to be learned, and so many intellectual pleasures ever at hand, I really see no necessity of ever knowing one card from another. And as to the society of a gambler, let it be shunned as that of a thief. If such a course were universally adopted, this race of ravenous beasts must soon die out for want of prey, and that cloud of miscreants which darken our street

corners, and infest our public places, would disappear.

I have now, Young Gentlemen, completed the course of Lectures which at the commencement of the winter I pledged myself to give you, on the Cultivation of the Mind, the Formation of Character, and the Conduct of Life. I made the first public announcement of the course, I confess, with no very sanguine hopes of success. I did it as an experiment upon the readiness of our city to respond to any literary enterprize, and to follow in the steps of the other cities of our country, which are making such ample provision for popular entertainment and instruction. The success of popular lectures in Boston and other places, seems to promise a new era in the cultivation of mind, as well as a safer resource for public amusement. I consider the late bequest of Mr. Lowell, for the establishment of a fund for the support of annual public lecturers in his native city, as one of the most remarkable and auspicious events of our age. That act rises in my mind to moral sublimity, when we consider the circumstances under which the purpose was first entertained. It was when wandering in solitude on the desolate plains, and among the mouldering ruins of Egypt, when gazing upon the monuments of despotism and ignorance, at the first access of the symptoms of fatal disease, that he formed the design of consecrating his wealth to the noble purpose

of public instruction. In that far-off land his large heart, which was so soon to be silent, beat only for his country. His thoughts were turned on the most effectual means of counteracting in our young Republic those fatal causes of decay and dissolution, which have gradually wrought the downfall of all the great empires of antiquity. These causes he justly considered to be ignorance and irreligion. The only cure for these is ample means of public instruction. Accordingly he devoted his ample fortune to this most patriotic purpose. Would that there were a Lowell in every city! Would that there were in our own, sufficient zeal and liberality to erect a suitable building for public lectures, that our youth of both sexes might have at least a choice between literary entertainment, and theatrical shows and circus exhibitions.

I am confident that the spirit of self-improvement is not wanting in our city. The various literary and scientific associations which have sprung up among us, all the work of the last few years, and the energy with which they are sustained, are sufficient indications that a better era is dawning upon us.

I take this opportunity to exhort those who hear me, to lend their aid to this great and good work. The cause of education, of mental and moral culture, is the cause of humanity, of patriotism and of God. He who has been the means of saving one human mind from ignorance, indolence and vice, is a bene-

factor to his race, and shall in nowise lose his reward. The zeal which is awakening among us in the cause of literary culture, will not rest satisfied with personal improvement. A generation will come forward, who will take an interest in our common schools, and be competent to manage their affairs. This community is not yet awake to the vital importance of universal primary education. There is nothing like it to form the political constitution of a community to health, strength and soundness.

In conclusion, I have only to thank you for the patient and unbroken attention with which you have listened to me through the whole course. If I know my own heart, I can sincerely say, that I have uttered no word which has not had for its object your improvement and happiness. I have for years been longing for an opportunity of saying what I have now said to the young men of Baltimore, of which most interesting body time will soon compel me to take leave. I have always considered too, that a life devoted to letters ought to produce some fruit of public benefit. While other heads are planning and other hands are toiling to advance the material interests of the community, and spread around us abundance of outward good, the scholar ought likewise to bring his offering of whatever of thought, of knowledge or of wisdom, he may have accumulat-

ed, to refresh, to embellish and refine our social existence.

I have never for a moment regretted my undertaking. The labor of composing these lectures in addition to my professional duties, though heavy, has been lightened by the consciousness of a pure intention to do good, and has been the solace of many a gloomy hour of domestic affliction.

Many of you are to me personally strangers, yet I feel that the hours we have spent here together, not unprofitably I hope for both, have established a tie between us of a most pleasing nature. I trust therefore, that you will consider the endeavors I have made for your intellectual entertainment as a pledge of the interest I feel in your personal success and happiness.

LECTURE VII.

DANGERS AND DUTIES OF THE MERCANTILE CLASSES.*

GENTLEMEN:

I have selected for the subject of our consideration this evening, the Social Influence of Trade, and the Dangers and Duties of the Mercantile Classes. The subject, though lying somewhat apart from the studies of my profession, has always to me been peculiarly attractive. The influences of trade are so interwoven with the history of mankind, with the progressive civilization, physical comfort, and moral condition of the race, that they meet the student and the philanthropist at every turn, and solicit from him, if he have any philosophical curiosity, a thorough investigation into the science of the production, the distribution, and consumption of wealth. The history of trade and of war is in substance the history of mankind. They have constituted almost the only intercourse of nations, and the lust of gain and of conquest, have both been made use of by an overruling Provi-

* Delivered before the Mercantile Library Association of Baltimore.

dence to subdue and civilize mankind, and to spread Art, Science, and Plenty into all lands. The merchant, while planning the distant voyage to some barbarous coast, with no higher purpose than to increase his wealth, and the general leading his forces into the wilderness where no civilized foot has trod, are equally the instruments in the hands of a higher Power of ministering to the gradual improvement of the world.

Trade has been the great means of civilizing and improving mankind, because it is the first thing which rouses them from the indolence and apathy of savage life. Show to man some comfort or luxury which he can obtain by the exchange of the fruits of his toil, and he will no longer lie all day dozing in the shade, while his wife provides for him a miserable subsistence. He is up with the dawn, and the hope of gain stimulates his activity to latest eve. In short, he is a savage no longer. Trade touches him with her magic wand, and transforms him into a new creature. She cleanses him from his filth and negligence, she clothes him in seemly and decent apparel, she spreads out his little garden into a wide plantation, and in the end, transforms his hut into a palace. And it is no less indispensable to the support of a high civilization than it is in its production. In short, it is to the welfare of mankind what the circulation is to the body, its life and health. Any obstruction of it is disease—a total cessation of it, paralysis and death.

Trade has ministered to the good of mankind in ways innumerable, by being the chief instrument in the accumulation of wealth. Wealth is not that private and exclusive good which some suppose. It is a common fund, even when in private hands, for the benefit of all. Trade contributes to its accumulation in two ways, in stimulating industry and production to the greatest extent, by keeping all who are able to labor employed; and then by drawing even a moderate profit from each, it swells the income of the factor beyond all reasonable demands of expenditure. If the merchant did not become rich, half his social utility would be destroyed. That excess of the merchant's gains over his expenditures, though not perhaps saved by him from pleasure or ostentation with any such designs, has been the precious seed-grain of the greatest achievements of mankind. It was that which built Thebes and Palmyra. It was that which gave birth to the wonders of architecture and sculpture which are still the admiration of the world. It was that which gave the priests of Egypt the leisure to elaborate, by slow degrees, that most wonderful contrivance of the human mind and great instrument of human progress, alphabetic writing. It was this accumulation of the merchant's gains, which first gave birth to navigation, and sent the ships of Tyre and Sidon to explore the shores of the Mediterranean, and summon innumerable barbarous tribes to

the blessings of civilization and physical comfort. Conquest and commerce, with reverence be it spoken, prepared the world for the advent of the Son of God, and laid down those great highways of the nations, along which the everlasting Gospel went to be proclaimed to every tongue and people. The Apostles were carried to their distant missions by the enterprises of commerce, and the very vessel in which Paul suffered shipwreck was laden with Egyptian wheat by some Alexandrian merchant for the markets of Italy. In modern times the achievements of trade have been no less beneficial to mankind. After the relapse of the western world into barbarism, trade was the first and principal instrument in the restoration of civilization. Commercial wealth was the first antagonist power to feudal tyranny. Cities created by commerce, afforded the first rallying point against the overshadowing power of the great landed proprietors. The vassal fled from slavery, where he could get no fair equivalent for his labor, to sell his industry to the merchant and the manufacturer, who gave him employment under a fair and voluntary stipulation.

It was the growth of cities and mercantile wealth, which regenerated the governments of modern Europe, which tamed down the fierce despotisms of the middle ages into limited and constitutional monarchies, and infused into them all of that republican spirit which they now possess. The kings of these rude ages

imagined that all their glory consisted in war and conquest. But wars could not be carried on without money, and money could be had only from those who possessed it, and they were usually the mercantile classes. The haughty monarch was willing, from time to time, to barter away portions of his prerogative for the gratification of his ambition. Thus he gradually disarmed himself of the power of doing mischief, and the will and interest of the many being felt in the government, public measures began to be taken with reference to the good of the mass instead of the interest of the few. Thus the influence of the mercantile classes continued to increase, till the discovery of the magnet and the consequent revelation of a new continent and a new passage to the Indies threw open the whole world to the enterprises of commerce. Since that, the mercantile power has been constantly advancing, till wealth has created to herself a throne higher than the kings of the earth. She has become the guardian of the peace of the world; so dependent have nations become upon each other for employment and bread, that the very rumor of a war sends the cry of famine and distress into the halls of legislation from so many millions of voices, and in such piercing tones, that the warlike spirit quails before the apprehension of greater ills. Thus the spirit of commerce is everywhere supplanting the spirit of war, and now constitutes the great league of amity among all man-

kind. That it is the ruling spirit of modern times, is proved by the fact that England by the means of it, though but a little island, is the most powerful nation on earth. The truth is that England is every where, where there is a shore to colonize, or an article of merchandise to be bought or sold.

The daughter of England, our country inherits her commercial propensities in exaggerated intensity. The American character is strongly commercial. Habits of trading are here formed almost from the cradle, and scarcely a man, woman, or child can be found among us who is not ready to buy and sell. Nothing so stimulates the growth of a nation as this very spirit of trade, and the ready transfer of property from one to another. It develops industry in the highest possible degree, and places all property in the hands of those who can make the most of it.

It is in fact the spirit of trade which rolls the tide of population so rapidly into the western wilds, a tide whose waves must soon break at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. The spirit of traffic was the pioneer which first explored those vast regions, and drew thither the hardy sons of toil and adventure. It was the indomitable spirit of trade which gave the new communities of the West a comfortable home, by furnishing, through the means of an easy inter-communication, a ready market for all they can produce. It is nothing else than the commercial spirit,

acting by the power of steam, which is now filling the valley of the Mississippi with its growing millions. It is this vast development of trade and population which is so rapidly building up our principal cities, and has added more than half a million to their population within the last ten years. And perhaps there never was since the beginning of the world such a field presented for commercial enterprise as is promised in the United States for the next fifty years. Such, young gentlemen, are the achievements of trade in the history of the world. Such are some of the influences it has exerted upon the condition of mankind, and such are the prospects of the profession which you have embraced in the country where your lot is cast. I shall now say something of the general principles, or rather, as it may be called, the philosophy of trade. This is a science of itself, and every young man destined to mercantile pursuits, ought to make himself familiar with it. Aside from its practical utility, it is one of the most curious and entertaining of all studies.

Trade is the exchange of the products of human labor. The merchant is merely the factor of the producer and consumer. His profession has grown up out of the general principle of the division of labor, which has appropriated all the different employments of life to distinct classes of individuals. The producer and consumer might, if they chose, do

all the business of trading themselves, and exchange their commodities at first hands. But they employ the merchant, because he can do it cheaper than they. He has more skill and knowledge, and therefore can do it better. Not only so, he can do the business of a great many, and therefore greatly lighten the expense of each. Take for instance the trader of a country village. He is in fact, though he may be growing rich all the time, a labor-saving and money-saving machine to the whole neighborhood. When he sets out for the city to make his purchases, he imagines that he is going to seek his own individual interest alone. But he is mistaken. He is the cheapest and most able agent which the village could send to make their purchases for the next six months. He is the cheapest, because he saves them all the trouble of going themselves, he makes a better selection than they could, and he gives them their articles of consumption at a lower cost than they could get them in any other way.

Just so it is with their products. It is for their advantage to dispose of them at the nearest market. Any attempt to carry them to a distant one would often nearly consume the product in the time and expense of transportation. The merchant, who devotes himself to the business, may do these things more cheaply and to greater advantage. He himself may make advances on them in anticipation of a better

price, which the producer cannot wait to realize. Thus it is, that commercial wealth is not a merely selfish affair. It does not benefit the possessor alone, but may be advantageous to all to whom he sells, or of whom he buys. It is always better for the producer to sell to a rich man than to a poor man. It is always better for the consumer to buy of a rich man than a poor man. And this fact alone ought to annihilate all those insane and unfounded feelings of hostility, which of late years have been attempted to be excited in the poor against the rich. The riches of a merchant, when accumulated by fair means, are a monument, not only to his own industry, talents, and perseverance, but of extended benefactions to countless individuals. They are the evidence of innumerable transactions, generally advantageous to both parties, or they would not have been continued. They are generally the evidence of a fair and faithful agency between the producer and consumer, or it would long since have come to an end.

I cannot pass over this part of the subject without adverting, in still stronger terms of reprobation, to that incendiary cry which has been attempted to be raised within a few years, of the poor against the rich. The assumptions upon which this outcry is founded, are as false as its motives are mean and contemptible. It is based upon a false apprehension of the position of the rich man in society. It is said in

the Scriptures, that the rich man is, with regard to God, the mere steward of his bounty. And so he is with regard to man. Wealth cannot exist in any part of the social system, without sooner or later benefiting the whole. It is, to quote a figure I have already used, to society what blood is to the system; though there may be some reservoirs where it is stored, and, for a while, detained, it flows through all, sustains and refreshes all; and no one man, not even its possessor, can appropriate to himself more than his share. Grant that he hoards it up; then it is to him as useless as it is to others. It is no longer his; it belongs to his heirs. Instead of being more self-indulgent, and more to be envied for the profusion of his pleasures, he is the most disinterested and abstemious man in the community. Does he use it, and endeavor to increase his store?—he cannot do so without benefiting others more than himself. He must lend it to others, or he must employ others. He must give others the use of his wealth, which is all that he has himself. It benefits them more than it does himself; for to them it is vital—their whole living. To him the use of a considerable part of it is unimportant, for we have supposed him to have a superabundance. Shall the poor hate the rich? They must hate them for the possession of the very thing which makes their own labor available, which fills

this world with comforts and luxuries, and makes it a comfortable habitation for rich and poor.

But is the poor man sent into the world without any inheritance in it? By no means. He has the richest inheritance of all, in the power to labor, for which God has so constituted things, that there shall ever be a more constant, a more certain, and unfailling demand, than for any thing else. Thus there is formed an inevitable partnership between labor and capital—the rich and the poor—which nothing but death can dissolve, in all the labors and enterprises of this life. Death itself does not dissolve it, but it descends from generation to generation. In this perpetual partnership, labor, so far from being oppressed, usually has the advantage. It is sure of its share, for it receives it as it goes along. The other is altogether uncertain and problematical. No enterprise is ever undertaken without this partnership, nor any business carried on. Labor receives its share without risk and responsibility, which all fall upon the other side. How have those great improvements been achieved, which have changed the face of the globe, and filled it with those comforts and luxuries which are now brought to the door of the humblest cottage? By the accumulation of wealth in a few hands. Had the agrarian principle prevailed, such accumulation could never have taken place, and those extensive blessings would have been forever precluded. It is only by—

large revenues falling into few hands, that those treasures can be amassed, which react upon society with such benignant power. Were those revenues equally divided, they would be spent from year to year. But by falling into the hands of a few, they so far exceed all reasonable expenditure, that they necessarily accumulate, and form those rich resources by which the most stupendous works are undertaken and accomplished, which give employment and bread to thousands, who otherwise would have been idle; and finally, by developing the capacities of our earth, give existence to millions who otherwise would never have enjoyed that inestimable boon. Nothing then, can be more unreasonable or unwise than the wish, that there were no rich men, even when cherished by the poor. Every accession of wealth to any individual, is a benefit to every other individual, let him be never so poor, for it renders the great partnership of mankind more profitable to all and to each. Away then, with the senseless clamor of the poor against the rich! In such a country as ours, where there is no hereditary aristocracy, no primogeniture, or entailed estates, this outcry is utterly unfounded. It is a political cheat, which has sapped the very foundations of our national prosperity.

I shall now say something of the nature and uses of money, the great instrument of trade, a subject which is at the present moment intensely interesting,

and ought to be thoroughly studied by every man at all connected with mercantile pursuits. Such is the difference of value of the different products of labor which one man wishes to exchange with another, that it has been found convenient to keep the account of differences in some third article by which both are valued. That third article is sometimes one thing, and sometimes another, in different ages and different nations. In ruder ages, it was often cows and oxen. This seems to have been the case with our ancestors, as would be indicated by the very name of metallic money, which was in time made to take their place—coin, from kine, the Saxon plural of cow. The armor of Diomed, according to Homer, cost nine oxen. If it had cost only half as much, four oxen and a half, it would have been difficult for him to make the change. As civilization advanced, and exchanges became more frequent, it was found necessary to have a currency which could be transported with greater facility, and more easily subdivided. This medium of exchange was found in the precious metals. They afforded for many ages the best, and almost the only, medium of exchange. They exist in small quantities, and are obtained by such slow and laborious processes, as not to be so multiplied as to become burdensome and unwieldy, nor suddenly to fluctuate in supply, and of course in value. They are capable of subdivision, and do not soon wear out.

They are, moreover, nearly of the same value all over the earth. So long as the productions of human labor were few, and the operations of trade simple and direct; so long as government was imperfect and unstable, and the intercourse of nations subjected to no laws or well-ordered treaties, the precious metals were the best and only safe representative of real property and merchandise. But the time at length arrived, by the vast increase of the wealth of the world, the multiplication, by a greater perfection of the arts, of the products of human industry, the extended operations of commerce, and the rapidity of the exchanges of trade, that coin, as the sole medium of exchange, was as far left behind as the cows and oxen which it originally represented. Paper took the place of coin in large transactions, because it is easier to count, and easier to carry. Paper became a part of the currency for another reason. The nominal value of property depends upon the amount of the currency. In modern times, the quantity of the property of the world increases in a most rapid ratio, in a new country like this—by an annual amount probably, equal to all the coin there is in circulation. If the same quantity of coin is still the measure of the value of the whole, the whole must depreciate in nominal value to the same amount. Mankind will never submit to this, and will resort to any expedient to avoid it. From these two circum-

stances,—the demand of more money to circulate the productions of mankind, and the inconvenience of using coin in distant or large transactions,—arose the great modern contrivance of banking and bills of exchange. It was found that paper, representing coin and convertible into it, was more available as a medium of exchange than coin itself. It was found that paper, representing coin, and known to be convertible into coin, was so much more acceptable and agreeable than coin, that it would remain in circulation for a long time, and be carried to distant places, and therefore more paper could be issued than there was coin to answer to it. That difference became a species of credit, which circulated and performed the functions of money. A bank then, is an association of individuals to lend money. A number of individuals combine, and change their property into coin, and loan it out for short periods; or rather, as much credit as, according to the ordinary laws of the circulation of money, can be based upon it. The interest they get upon the credit they lend, over and above their real capital, they calculate will pay all their officers, and other expenses, and leave them a fair revenue for their investment. Banks, thus contrived and thus managed, have been a vast advantage to the world. They bring down the rate of interest; because that which is done as a regular business, and by people who devote themselves to it, may always

be done cheaper and better than by those who only occasionally take it up. To those who use them, their great office is to facilitate the transmission of products from the producer to the consumer, or in other words, to enable the producer to obtain advances on his goods while they are on their way to the consumer, that he may live in the meantime, and still carry on the business of production. The producer sells his product to the merchant, who stands in the place of the ultimate consumer. But such is the number of those transactions which are taking place in a civilized and advanced state of society, that not a tenth part of them could be paid in coin at any reasonable valuation. The producer therefore, takes a note of the merchant, which represents and pledges property to an equal amount. But this note is not current as money, nor can it be subdivided so as to pay labor and buy materials. He goes to the bank therefore, and exchanges this credit for one that is divisible and current as money, by giving a small premium. The consumer, who is likewise a producer, has sold his product to the merchant, and got his note discounted in the same way. Thus the bank notes, having performed the functions of money, are again paid into the bank, and they cancel the original notes. If all parties are honest, and no man consumes more than he produces, at the end of the year there is no loss to any party, and the whole

process of production, distribution, and consumption, has been completed with greater ease and cheapness than it could have been in any other way, by a mixed currency of coin and bank notes. Such are the legitimate operations of a bank, and it is one of the happiest contrivances of modern times. Nothing can be more calculated to develop the resources of a new country, where nothing is so much wanted as capital, and where it is desirable to turn the products of labor into money as soon as possible, and thus make them available for new production. Nothing could be more unwise or unfounded, than the prejudices which have of late been excited against them. They are said to be aristocratic institutions. The very opposite is the fact, so long as their stock is free to the purchase of all; they are equally open to the rich and the poor, so that they enable the poor to become capitalists on the same terms with the richest. This is in fact, one of the great benefits which they confer upon society. They bring into active and gainful use small portions of capital, which would otherwise have remained idle and useless, for want of knowledge on the part of their possessors how to use them to advantage. I have no doubt too, they are moralizing in their influence upon business men, by making them more careful of their characters and expenditure. They are most truly republican and levelling in their tendencies, inasmuch as they make

character and business talent immediately available to every young man that is starting in the world, and thus diffuse business, instead of concentrating it in the hands of a few colossal capitalists.

That banks are capable of abuses, and great abuses, I do not deny; but this is no more than can be said of every thing else that is good. All they require, to be the most useful institutions, is honest and prudent management; to be restrained from disproportionate issues, and to be kept strictly within the sphere of an intermediate agency between the producer and the consumer; and moreover, a wise and steady government, which will so regulate its intercourse with foreign nations, as always to keep nearly the same amount of coin in the country, to be the basis of banking operations.

Such is the position of the merchant in society, and such the functions he performs in the great machinery of human affairs. Such are the materials and the instruments with which he works, as the general agent between the producer and consumer of the various productions of human labor. After this general view, we shall be able more clearly to point out his dangers, his temptations, and his duties.

In the first place, there is apt to be too great a rush into the profession. It is supposed to be the easiest and most expeditious way of acquiring wealth; and wealth, it is supposed, brings with it all imagin-

able good. There is the same delusion about it that there is about lotteries; the eye is attracted and fascinated by the glare of a few splendid prizes, while the greater number of blanks is never taken into account. So the young man, as he walks the streets of cities, is dazzled with the splendor of a few palaces, or the fame of a few mercantile houses, which he sees engrossing to themselves a great portion of its business. These things he sees; but he does not see the far greater number, who sailed upon the same sea, but sunk long ago, and are seen no more. He does not see the toils and anxieties by which that wealth has been amassed, which bleach the locks, and wrinkle the brow, faster than any other pursuit.

There is a delusion with regard to trade into which the unreflecting are too apt to fall—that of supposing it can be increased to any extent by more people going into it. It is not like agriculture in this respect. Agriculture is a real production of the necessities of life. Every new acre brought under cultivation increases the means of subsistence to the human family. There is no danger of over-production; for agricultural products are not only the primary and universal means of sustaining human life, but they are the basis of all other employments and professions. As they expand, other things will naturally keep pace. But a small country-town can

expend no more than they earn; and if a reasonable profit on their consumption will sustain but one trader, two would not increase the business, but only divide it, and probably ruin both. Just so of a city or a nation.

This excessive competition becomes a snare to mercantile life, for it is too apt to induce unfair means to get and retain customers, either by giving unreasonable credits, or adopting a ruinously small rate of profits. It is this excessive competition, and the practices to which it has led, which has given rise to a saying which I often hear, but never without the warmest indignation, that it is impossible for a merchant to be an honest man. If this be the fact, all I have to say is, let the profession perish from among men. Such an anomaly was never intended to exist in the creation of God. If this be a fact, let cities be swallowed up, and commerce be buried in the bosom of the ocean. Let mankind return to barbarism, if they cannot innocently live in society. But it is not a fact. One moral law runs through the universe, and is supreme in the human soul—the law of morality, the law of truth, honor, and integrity. It equally pervades and governs every profession and occupation in life. No man ever derived any solid advantage from violating one iota of it. It leads to ruin ten times where it procures even a temporary benefit. The merchant's moral trials are great, and

occur more frequently than those of any other pursuit. They are the greater from the fact, that the limits of commercial honor and honesty have never been defined. It has never been settled, and perhaps never can be, how far a merchant may honorably avail himself of his knowledge and another's ignorance of the value of commodities, and the state of the markets. In commending his goods too, there seems to be no limit fixed how much he may say by way of offset to the disposition he supposes to exist on the other side to depreciate them. There is a passage in one of the Apocryphal books, which has always struck me as containing a most fearful warning of the moral perils of trade, and those who are engaged in it are better judges than I, whether it be satire or truth. "As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of stones, so doth sin stick close between buying and selling." It is certainly one of the easiest things in the world to commend a thing we wish to sell beyond the bounds of strict truth, and to conceal those defects which we are in honor bound to disclose. It is still more difficult to be practically convinced that our true interest lies in the same line with the most transparent integrity. But that it does, no man who believes in God or truth, has the least reason to doubt for a moment. The first great temptation to which the young merchant is exposed is that of going into business without sufficient knowledge,

without sufficient capital, without sufficient business prospects. To the young man impatient to establish himself in life, this may seem a hard saying, and a discouraging sentiment. But it is a view of things which it is necessary for him to take for his own good. For although it may seem a great evil for a young man to see the best years of life passing away while he is accomplishing nothing of those vast schemes with which the youthful mind is ever teeming, there are far worse evils than this on the other side of the alternative. It may seem hard to be doing nothing, but it is still worse to be laboring to no purpose, to embark in a project which is desperate from the beginning, every movement of which is pain and difficulty, and the issue always involved in the shadows of doubt, sometimes in the blackness of darkness. The anxieties of business are sufficiently great under all circumstances, its perpetual risks are enough to disquiet life under the most favorable conditions. But when to this are added the troubles which spring from insufficient means, want of skill and mistaken enterprises, there is scarcely any situation more undesirable.

The second temptation to which I shall advert, is that which besets the prosperous merchant. Great prosperity is generally the merchant's snare; and if you hear a merchant complain of being in trouble, you may be almost sure that he will tell you, that it

is not long since he was in the full tide of successful experiment. The reason of this is, that success gives a man credit, and tempts him to give credit in turn. And credit, though one of the most useful of things, is one of the most dangerous. At first it is plausible and hopeful, but in the end it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. It may make a man's fortune, and it may make a man a slave for life. In quiet times the profits of business may keep pace with the high interest of money. But too often the industrious merchant, who has grown gray in toil and care, on a review of his life, discovers that he has been at work from his youth for the most disinterested purpose of giving the money-lender six per cent. This abuse of credit leads not only individuals, but nations astray. When, by means of banks, credit itself is transformed into money and becomes the basis of new operations, then its tendency is to carry up the nominal prices of every thing, and lead every body into the delusion that they are rapidly growing rich. Things are bought and sold without any reference to demand, or use, or consumption, and the merchant attempts to do as much business in one year as he ought to do in three. But this mania, though commencing among the mercantile classes, is not confined to them. The staid farmer, the sober mechanic are bitten, and become as rabid as the rest of the community. They are told of a great rise

which has taken place in the value of their property, and they wish to realize it. They sell at an advance perhaps, and realize in the first instance, but having cut loose from sober reason they cannot be contented to reinvest in solid, useful property—or if they did, other property has advanced as much in nominal value as their own—but purchase something which they hope to sell again. Thus property shifts hands, each time at an advance, till at last the bubble bursts, the world wake up from their trance, and find the sum total of real wealth no greater than it was before, and the last holders are ruined at the very moment when they thought they had realized a fortune.

Beware then of speculation. It is the syren which sings over the rocks of ruin. Shut your ears to her song, hurry away from the sound of her voice. Be contented with the moderate profits of a regular business. Be sure to keep coolest when all the world are becoming most excited: you may, in so doing, not only save yourself, but be of lasting service to others.

This leads me to warn you against the original sin which is the source of all those actual transgressions—the inordinate desire of becoming suddenly rich. Suppose you were to succeed at a very early age, the chances are more than even, that the command of means plunges you into dissipation, which is perdition to soul and body. It brings in the prize too

soon, and thus cuts short the pleasures of the chase. Gradual accumulation is more safe and more happy. I do not mean to undervalue the advantages of wealth. I know they are many and great. But the desire of an overgrown fortune is little else than insane. It makes a man a slave while he lives, and when he is gone it is more frequently the source of litigation, alienation, and misery, than happiness to his heirs. I hope it is unnecessary to warn any one who hears me this night, against a species of moral turpitude which we sometimes see exhibited in the mercantile world—business undertaken with reckless purposes from the beginning. No words can describe the moral obliquity of that man, who gets large amounts of property into his hands, and then considers it as lawful prize, to support his own unprincipled habits of expense and extravagance. The robber upon the high seas is no more to be looked upon as a public enemy than the man who gets into his possession the hard earnings of the poor and industrious, the little all of the trusting mechanic or poor widow, and applies it to his own purposes of luxury and profusion.

Nor is it, I trust, any more necessary to warn you against the adoption of a merely legal morality. Such is the imperfection of laws, that they are quite as potent to make a wrong as to correct one, and some of the most stupendous frauds are committed under their sanction. He who attempts to justify to

himself such a course of conduct, will soon find every principle of honor sapped within him, and finally be betrayed, when he least expects it, into transactions which will involve him in disgrace and ruin.

There is but one road to permanent happiness and prosperity, and that is the path of high-souled honor, of the most transparent honesty, of unspotted integrity.

And certainly there never was a time when mercantile life was surrounded with more temptations than at the present moment. The sudden and violent change from a redundant to a deficient currency, has so disturbed the relation between debtor and creditor, has made the enforcement of contracts fraught with such enormous and palpable wrong, that justice seems quite as often to lie in the evasion as in the fulfilment of honest stipulations. But let those who are thus entangled remember, that commercial embarrassments are in their nature temporary, but principle is immutable and eternal. The onward progress of a country like this can never be permanently repressed. A fresh soil, an enterprising population, a high perfection of the arts, and an elevated tone of morality, are the elements of national greatness.

We are a world within ourselves, and every interruption of our foreign relations will only tend more rapidly to develop our internal resources. Our pre-

sent troubles, like all human things, must at length pass away, and happy will he be who comes out of them with a strong heart and a clear conscience. The great processes of production and consumption must still go on, and while they are kept up, the merchant must always find employment.

Business is a mighty, ever-flowing stream, and if its natural channel becomes obstructed, it will find another, and soon wear a smooth passage where at first all seems rough and rugged.

The hope of the patriot is, that the lessons of the last few years will not soon be forgotten. There is no teaching like that of bitter experience. Our nation is yet in its youth. It is now forming the chart of its future voyage on the sea of existence. It is to be hoped that it will set a beacon-light on the rocks on which it has well nigh been wrecked. Things must at length settle down, a calm must succeed such elemental war, and we have every reason to hope that we shall have a season of prosperity as lasting and tranquil as our sufferings have been violent and protracted.

LECTURE VIII.

ON THE PRIVILEGES AND FOLLIES OF AMERICAN SOCIETY.*

GENTLEMEN,

WHEN I accepted the invitation to address you on this occasion, it was with a determination of selecting some topic of discussion, not of mere literary entertainment, giving play to the imagination, excitement to the feelings, or gratification to the taste, but of immediate practical and permanent importance. The end of all literary associations being, in my opinion, not to fill up an idle hour with mere amusement, nor to learn to talk superficially of all matters, nor to exercise the ingenuity in advocating indifferently every side of every question, but rather to gain true wisdom, to acquire a knowledge of things as they are, to learn the actual advantages and disadvantages of our condition, to appreciate the blessings we enjoy, to devise the means of freeing ourselves from

* Delivered before the Convention of Literary Societies of Baltimore.

the evils we suffer, and of shunning the dangers to which we are exposed.

It is with these views that I have chosen to direct your attention this evening to the Privileges and Follies of American Society. My thoughts have taken this turn I suppose from the present social and pecuniary distresses of the country, which for the last few years have been so intense as to absorb all attention, and become the universal subject of thought and conversation.

In the selection of this subject I would beg to be considered as disclaiming all political feeling, bias, or purpose. These would be as foreign to my pursuits and habits as they would be to this occasion and this audience. My design is simply to give the plain reasons why we are not as happy and prosperous and contented as a people, as the boundless blessings of our condition would seem to give us the means of becoming.

One half the misery and discontent from which the American people are now suffering, arises from ignorance of their comparative condition when contrasted with that of any other nation upon the face of the globe. Not satisfied with the fact that they are better off than any other people, they are determined to be miserable because they cannot be all kings and princes.

For my own part, I am not sure but that notwith-

standing all our complaints, we are enjoying the golden age, such as has never been before and will never come again.

One of the greatest advantages under which we are passing through life is, that our nation is in its youth. We are not aware of this advantage any more than the young man is, who is in possession of health, strength, and energy. He knows what they were only when overtaken by weakness, decrepitude, and decay. A young people will always be comparatively virtuous. The colonies of this country were founded under the best auspices for the true dignity and excellence of human nature. Many of the colonists were exiles for conscience sake, many more from the love of enterprise and independence. Both of these causes furnish the best materials for a new people. The school of hardship which they passed through after their arrival, tended still further to exalt and purify their characters. Perhaps there never has been since the beginning of the world a nation of purer patriots, or more virtuous citizens, than composed these colonies at the commencement of the revolutionary war. No government was ever established on juster or more equitable principles. What they wanted to complete the blessings of their lot, was ampler physical resources. They came out of their first struggle poor and in debt, dependent on foreign countries for all the luxuries, and many of

the comforts of life. They had not emerged from the depressing consequences of their first war, nor discharged their national debt, before they were plunged in a second still more expensive. Within the last ten years that debt has been paid off, and the opportunity for prosperity and happiness that has been afforded has been unsurpassed since the commencement of time.

Our government, though degenerated from its primitive integrity, is as yet comparatively pure. It is in the nature of governments to grow corrupt. Those who have power are prone to abuse it, and by abuse to perpetuate it to themselves. In this process of gradual deterioration there are no causes at work to arrest us, and it will go on to we know not what result. In the meantime we have reason to bless Providence that we live under so good a government, of the slightest advantages of which not one in a thousand of those who have lived on our globe has had the remotest idea. Every American has reason to be grateful every day of his life, that he lives under a government fifty and not five hundred years old. As the country grows older the corruptions of the government will increase. Intrigue and management will be more and more the order of the day. The honest voice of the people will be less and less heard in the halls of legislation, and all public measures will more and more assume the form of

electioneering manœuvres for the acquisition or the perpetuation of party power. Not that there is really less patriotism in the country than there ever was, but there is nothing to call it out. Were any great crisis to arrive, the selfseeking, who now for their own ends of private ambition or filthy lucre busy themselves in public affairs, would slink away from the most responsible stations, and another and different description of men come forward to save the Republic, such as founded it by their wisdom, and cemented it with their blood.

Our form of government is not only the simplest machine for its purpose, but likewise the cheapest. Intelligence and morality are here possessed in so high a degree, and in such general diffusion, that we need less government than any other nation. We are more a law to ourselves. The consequence is that we need no standing army to overawe our populace or to preserve public order. We are the only powerful nation on the continent. We are therefore not compelled to expend all we can accumulate in surrounding our borders with fortifications, and in garrisoning them with idle thousands to consume instead of produce. The consequence is, that our taxes are lighter than those of any other civilized nation. It is calculated by the Political Economists of England, that one third of the wages of the laboring classes is consumed by taxation, leaving them barely enough

to procure the simplest necessities of life. In the most heavily taxed of our country it does not amount to a twentieth. The wasteful wars of the last two centuries are now visited upon the present population of England, besides all the burdens arising from a most expensive and extravagant government. What abundant reason have we to rejoice that our lot is cast in a country comparatively new, when debt and abuse have not accumulated to such a degree as to crush the industrious classes into the dust! We are happy in living at a period when population is sufficiently numerous to furnish us with all the conveniences and the luxuries of life, to draw from the soil the vast variety of its productions, and before that disastrous era has arrived when population becomes too dense for the resources of nature.

I do not hesitate to say, after the most careful examination of the subject, that I consider almost all our social advantages to arise from our position in this respect, that we are a progressive people, one which has not as yet reached the bounds prescribed to them by the capacities of the soil. The moment a nation arrives at the point at which it can be said that its population is overgrown, that moment a fearful paralysis shoots through the whole body politic. The evil consequences of this state of things it would be almost endless to enumerate.

The worst effect, and the fountain of all other evils

is, that it makes human nature vile, hardens the heart, and destroys all interest of man in his fellow-man. As we are limited in our faculties, so are our powers of interest and attachment. Therefore it is that God has circumscribed the limit of a family to a few. A man can take an interest in five, or ten, or a dozen, but fifty he could scarcely learn to distinguish the one from the other. In a small country village, every one is known to every one else. The misfortune or the death of one excites the sympathies of all. People in a city scarcely know their next neighbors. They see the funeral procession, and the only reflection that is excited is that some one is dead. In a small neighborhood where all are known to all, and the interest of the parents is transmitted to the children, there is a concern for the young, a common zeal for the education of all. With heart and hand they will establish and sustain institutions for the education of the rising generation. But let ten thousand strangers be poured in upon them, of whom they know nothing, and in whom they can take no personal interest, and they are overwhelmed and discouraged; and seeing the work multiplying so rapidly upon them they give up in despair. A sort of apathy creeps over the whole community, which inclines men to let things take their own course. A small community may be managed, controlled, and moulded into almost any

shape, but what can possibly be done with an infinite multitude?

A Christian missionary arrives among the millions of Asia, burning with zeal, and anxious to do good. If he had found a sparse population, or an isolated community, with the unknown spiritual power of the Gospel he might make his influence felt, and extensively at no distant period. But as it is, he might almost as well make a mark on the sands of the desert with the hope of its remaining, as to produce a permanent impression upon the loose and floating multitudes of the East.

But an overgrown population not only chills all patriotism and philanthropy, and makes human nature vile by overmultiplying the species, but it degrades man essentially in his character and condition. In the first place it reduces the wages of labor, and makes the mass of the people poor. Now, nothing can stand this. In the train of poverty necessarily follow ignorance and vice, a general subserviency and degradation of character. And these evils are altogether irremediable. Go to the vast territories of the British East Indies, and contemplate their social condition. An absolute veto is put upon all improvement by this single fact of a crowded population. Man has become so vile that he gladly performs the labor of the brutes, and human beings stand ready, like our coach horses, to transport you on their

shoulders from place to place for a few cents. A common laborer may be hired for five or six dollars a year. Instead of that variety of food, in which the poorest are here able to indulge, the laborer there subsists upon a handful of rice, and he sleeps in the warmer parts of the year just where night happens to find him. Now, what can be done for the moral and physical improvement of a population in this condition? This one circumstance, an overgrown population puts a negative upon every thing. An unreflecting citizen of this happy country will say, "Give them a Republican government and all will be well." He does not reflect that the very postulates of a Republic do not exist, education and independence universally diffused. Without these a Republican government is impossible. It can exist only in name. The ignorant, the vicious, and the barbarous, and a starving population will be all of these, can have no other government than a despotism.

There is an admirable story told of one of the islands in the Mediterranean, which fell into the hands of the English during the revolutionary disturbances of Europe, illustrative of the impossibility of maintaining a Republican government in an ignorant and barbarous community. The English in their great zeal for the spread of free institutions, were determined to impart this great blessing to their new possession. So the island was divided like England and

America into election districts, and a Congress or Parliament chosen to deliberate upon the affairs of the Commonwealth. The members were chosen in due form, and assembled, chose a speaker, and organized. So far all went on well. But like many other similar attempts, the latter end of the Commonwealth forgot the beginning. A subject was proposed for deliberation. One speaker arose and expressed his opinion, then another on the opposite side. But unaccustomed to control their passions the speakers became excited, and from a public debate it became a personal conflict, the partizans of each side joined in the fray, and in a few minutes the legislative hall became a confused sea of arms and legs and bodies, struggling, kicking, and striking in the most admired disorder. The military were called in to disperse the rioters, and thus exploded the experiment of introducing a Republican government among barbarians. Just so has it been in South America, and just so will it be every where in the absence of a sufficient degree of intelligence, morality, and physical comfort.

But it may be said, "You must educate the people." Pass from India to China, and you will see that education is no remedy for the evils of over population. They had paper and printing ages before they were known in Europe. "Books," says a late traveller, "are multiplied at a cheap rate, and to almost

any extent, and every peasant and pedlar has the common depositories of knowledge within his reach. It would not be hazarding too much to say, that in China there are more books, and more people to read them than in any country in the world." And yet China, by this one transcendent evil, a crowded population, notwithstanding its universal education and perfection of the arts, is one of the most pitiable nations on earth. Every winter whole hosts of the population suffer the extremes of misery for the want of fuel and clothes. One custom, that of infanticide, so common among them, is the sure evidence of the last degree of wretchedness. The rate of wages is a fair index of the condition of the common people in any country. In China the average wages of a common laborer is about eight or ten cents a day, and the pay of a soldier the same. The condition of such a people is next to hopeless.

About half way between the condition of the Chinese and the Americans is the condition of the laboring classes in Europe. From the same cause the disproportion of employment to population, wages are just sufficient in that severer climate to keep soul and body together. Every revulsion in trade in so wealthy a country as England throws thousands into beggary, and in Paris it is said that forty thousand human beings rise in the morning uncertain where

they are to procure the food that is to redeem that day from starvation.

America is the Paradise of the laboring man, that is of man in general, for four fifths of mankind live upon the wages of labor. The rate of wages is the grand criterion of the human condition. Here they are from one third to a half higher than in any other civilized portion of the globe. That is altogether owing to the thinness of our population when compared to the capacities of the soil.

But as sure as time revolves these advantages will gradually disappear. Now our surplus population finds a home and employment in the unoccupied regions of the west, where they not only make ample provision for their own wants, but better the condition of those they have left behind, by furnishing a market for the products of their industry. But the time will at length come when this retreat will be cut off, when the rising generation and the unsuccessful in business will have no place to which they may betake themselves, and find immediate and profitable employment, but must remain and become mere drones in the hive, or sink into apathy or imbecility. It is astonishing what a difference it makes in the same man to be placed in a crowded or a thin population. Nothing so dwarfs the mind, and belittles the character as having no opportunity, as having nothing to do; and nothing so improves the talents

and expands the character as full scope and room for action and enterprise. What is true of an individual, is true of a community. The greatest possible stimulus is a little success, and great opportunities of course are accompanied with unbounded hope. And one great reason of the wonderful enterprise of our country for the last few years has been the fact, that no country ever presented such opportunities. But such a state of affairs as now exists kills all enterprise, quells all ambition, and absolutely annihilates for the time all the energies by which a people are borne onward in the march of improvement. The time will at length come when this stagnation and difficulty of obtaining employment shall be the rule, and activity the exception.

We shall sooner lose the advantage of being a young people and a sparse population from the tremendous and unceasing tide of immigration that is setting in upon us from the old world. It now amounts to more than a hundred thousand a year, and threatens to denationalize us by an overpowering foreign element. These however, are evils which can take place only when all who hear me will be unconscious of what is done under the sun. In the meantime we have every reason to rejoice that our lot falls to us in the happiest of all possible periods of a nation's existence.

But possessed of such wonderful advantages why

are we not happy? Why is there so much real suffering, why is there so much discontent? This brings me to the second part of our subject, the Follies of American Society.

The first that I shall mention is want of economy, reckless extravagance. Every American thinks himself a born prince, and considers himself aggrieved if he cannot be clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. We are indeed a nation of princes in our culture, our clothing and accommodations, compared with the mass of any other nation on the globe. To be convinced of this, we have only to compare those bands of foreign peasants, who land on our shores, and pass to the western wilds, with our native population. They are, we may suppose, fair specimens of the laboring classes of Europe, and do we know any thing corresponding to them among us? Ages after ages have passed away and they have remained the same, knowing nothing better than the bare necessities of life.

But are we happy in this superiority? By no means. We are in fact poorer than they. Every man is poor, who lives beyond his means. And this is almost the universal vice of the American character. The custom houses in this country annually tell a tale that ought to astonish the world. The foreign luxuries that are consumed among us demonstrate us to imagine ourselves kings and princes to say the

least. The apparatus for the manufacture of looking glasses are said to have been enlarged in France, in order to accommodate the demands of the American market, to adorn the saloons of New York, Boston and Philadelphia, with ornaments too expensive for palaces in Europe. The one article of silks alone was imported to the amount of about one sixth of the whole exports of the country. These very articles of luxury give an overaction to trade, and increase a fictitious wealth, which is expended in this way. Nothing can be more pernicious to a nation than such an example set in high places. It is pernicious to the very people who indulge in them. No solid happiness can ever be derived from mere display. It is appropriate only in a hereditary aristocracy, which ought not to exist in any community. That there always will be wealth in such a community as this, we do not deny, that those who possess it will use it we are equally sure, but that the way in which they use it has a vast influence upon society we do not doubt. It is said that the extravagances of the rich are the support of the poor. There is this palliation for them it is true, but in our case it does not apply, for the luxuries in which we indulge are the productions of foreign labor. What becomes of the eighteen millions which was sent out of this country the last year for the purchase of silks? They went to sustain the silk growers of Italy and France, the

weavers of Lyons and of England. What becomes of the money, which is annually sent out of the country for the purchase of gold and silver ornaments? It builds up the mighty cities of Paris and London. The consequence is that the coin is drawn out of the country to pay for mere superfluities which we are better without than with. The basis is withdrawn from our paper currency and then comes a tremendous crash. Politicians may say what they will as to the bearing of the measures of government. The present embarrassments could not have come on without the most reckless extravagance.

It never can be any better so long as the same dispositions and habits continue to prevail. There is no fertility of soil, there is no industry, there is no perfection of the mechanic arts, that can stand extravagant habits. Nothing is more easy than to expend money on luxuries. If a man, whose income is ten thousand dollars, chooses to spend twelve, he can do it with the greatest ease. A few jewels, or a few shawls, or a few entertainments will swallow it all. But then the man is essentially poor the moment he exceeds his income, and what is worse he is growing poorer, and ere long will find himself embarrassed and miserable. God has so ordained it, that the necessities, and even the comforts of life are abundant, and within the means of all. They have a known and almost a fixed permanent value. While

people confine themselves to these they know what they are doing, and can regulate their expenditures with judgment. Once step out of them into the domain of luxuries, and all things have a fanciful and arbitrary value, which swallows up every thing like the ravenous and insatiable sea. Then comes the tyrant fashion, and forces each successive grade as it respects wealth, into a rate of living quite up to their means and too often beyond them. What surer way could possibly be devised of destroying all happiness, no matter if nature were ten times more bountiful than she now is? The wastefulness of man can more than keep pace with any exuberance of the soil. We are made to toil, and toil will surround us with every thing which can minister to our real enjoyment. But we were not intended to make slaves of ourselves for the purpose of ministering to false taste and foolish ambition. We are made for society, but if the intercourse of society is burdened by fantastic usages and profuse expense, we in effect debar ourselves from its pleasures.

Another folly, which is peculiarly aggravated in this country, is a vice of the mind, inordinate ambition, and that discontent which grows out of it. For my own part, I sometimes think, that it counterbalances all our other advantages, and the very slaves for this reason seem the happiest people among us, because their peace is not disturbed by the gnawings

of this Promethean vulture. American travellers assure us, that contrary to their expectation, they find the greatest appearance of cheerfulness and contentment among the subjects of some of the worst despotisms of the old world. The Orientals, living in mud villages, and subsisting on a handful of rice, are seen in groups before their cabin doors indulging themselves in music and dancing, and various kinds of sport and amusement. A late traveller in the wilds of Siberia brings back the following testimony concerning the contentment of the people. "The Russian peasant," says he, "surrounded by forests, shut up in his smokey cabin, or toiling in his short summer, is always joyous, always singing in the gaiety of his heart. The dwelling of the poorest man in this community is furnished luxuriously compared with the huts of these happy people." These very peasants, whom we pity as we see them pass through our streets, seem to suffer no deficiency of animal spirits, and it must be confessed, present a striking contrast to the woful visages of our own population. Of all nations under heaven the Americans appear the most care worn, and dejected race. They seem of all people to enjoy life the least. The reason of this is, I believe, that the freedom of our institutions, and the unlimited opportunity that is given to all for rising in the world, have inspired every individual from the highest to the lowest with a rest-

less ambition of pressing into what he conceives to be the next higher grade, and of course with discontent in his present condition. It is wonderful that it is not perceived, that this pursuit is absolutely endless. It is demonstrably so if it pervades all ranks. If those, who are best provided, see something just before them still beyond their reach, then as far as contentment is concerned all are on a level, and all are equally unhappy. As to physical comfort, there is less difference than is generally supposed. Luxurious tables and costly wines do not minister to enjoyment on the whole. Temperance is the only security for health, and it is really fortunate for a majority of mankind that abstemiousness is enforced upon them by necessity.

It is all well that there should be the strongest desire of rising in the world. But what is rising? Here is all the difficulty. Is it for the prosperous man to move into a bigger house, and patronize the tailors, the milliners, and the upholsterers, and give splendid entertainments? This may be perfectly allowable and proper as the reward and natural consequence of industry and frugality, but it is not rising in the world. It amounts to nothing but simply patronizing tailors, milliners, upholsterers, and cooks. The only way to rise in the world, even for the prosperous man, is to cultivate his mind and manners, and educate his family. It is not to set up his carriage,

though this may be perfectly allowable if he can afford it. It is not to resort to this or that watering place, though there is no objection to his doing that if he pleases. It is to raise himself and family in the scale of moral and intellectual beings. It is not to bring up his sons in idleness under the preposterous notion of making them gentlemen, and in so doing make them fops and dandies instead of men, and thus prepare them for squandering his estate much faster than he amassed it. It is not to educate his daughters with merely showy accomplishments, and with the expectation that this world is to be a show, and life a holiday. The best symptom of rising in the world that he can give, is to despise the follies of American society, to set at naught the despotism of foreign fashions, to perceive and resist the absurdity of a business community following in the footsteps of the idle and worthless aristocracy of Europe. It would show hopeful signs of rising above the vulgar, both great and small, if he should refuse to countenance the nonsense of turning night into day and day into night; and as the end of society is enjoyment, he should perceive the ridiculousness of going to a party of pleasure at his usual hour of retiring to rest.

It would show that he was rising if he should bring up his sons to some useful, honorable, and profitable employment, and save them from the

degradation of living to show off their persons and fine clothes in the streets. If he should infuse into the minds of his daughters a strong tincture of common sense, and teach them to look on life as a scene of elevated duty and responsibility, instead of an opportunity for the indulgence of ambition, vanity, and selfishness.

The present condition of our country would seem to demonstrate, that it is impossible for mankind to be permanently prosperous and happy, even under the most favorable circumstances; that they may as well be afflicted and struck down by war, famine, and pestilence, for if left to themselves, and provided with every thing to make them happy, it is only to plunge themselves into a misery deep in proportion to the exuberance of their blessings.

But it may be asked, if these evils I have been enumerating are hopeless and without cure? If they are, why draw such a humiliating picture of our national character? I answer that the case is not hopeless. The remedy is at hand, and of the easiest application. All that is wanting is the revival of common sense, and the assertion of personal independence. No nation has more of both these qualities than the Americans, but circumstances for the time have put them both in abeyance. Fashionable habits do not sit well on the American people. The very people who conform to them, have a secret

contempt for them, even while they submit to their bondage. They are scarcely ever hereditary, for they are not suffered to be so by the rapid changes which commercial revulsions bring about. Common sense is perpetually uttering her voice against them, and that voice will be clearer and louder as the community learn to trace to them those public distresses, which in such rapid succession sweep over the country.

There is too a sense of personal independence among us, unknown under any other form of government, which is mighty in strength, but has hitherto been working like the gigantic Cyclop in the dark, and wasting its force in an aimless radicalism. It is a good thing corrupted, and as matters now stand works little but mischief. But the time I hope is coming, when this giant will have the use of eyes as well as hands, when intelligence will be diffused among what are now termed the middle and lower classes, and rouse them to see what a miserable use they make of their means, when it constitutes the highest object of their ambition to wear the same sort of a hat or bonnet as is worn by those whose only ground of distinction is, that they are the first to adopt the latest fashionable absurdity.

With the spread of intelligence, it is to be hoped, that the conviction will gain ground that the sacred pleasures of home do not arise from a splendid

establishment, elegant furniture, a luxurious table, but from virtuous affections, true hearts, and enlightened minds, that the delights of society do not spring from cumbersome and costly entertainments, which enslave the entertainer, not from expensive attire, which is generally the vexation and the regret of the wearer, but from cheerfulness, affability, intelligence, and true courtesy.

I have thus attempted to give you a rapid sketch of what seemed to me to be the peculiar privileges of American Society, I have shown you that they are such as have never been possessed before, and perhaps can never occur again.

I have shown you how miserably they are thrown away; that extravagance, false ambition, and discontent, have almost neutralized the natural advantages of our condition. I have pointed out, I think, the only source from which relief can come, from the reaction of the common sense and the personal independence of the people.

LECTURE IX.

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MECHANIC ARTS.*

GENTLEMEN:

IN considering the influence which the use of machinery has had upon the civilization, the comfort and the morality of mankind, we shall take a brief view of those means by which man, originally the weakest and most ill-provided of animals, partly by the superiority of his physical organization, but chiefly by the divine gift of reason, has raised himself from ignorance, nakedness, and destitution, to the noble being we now find him, of science, art, refinement, of laws and government, of comfort and abundance, of cities and trade, of intellectual discipline, and literary culture.

It has been made a question, whether the supremacy of the human being, were owing most to superior physical organization, or to his higher intellectual

* Delivered before the Maryland Academy of Science and Literature.

capacity. It has been said, but we think with more quaintness than truth, that the stupendous architecture of Egypt, and the exquisite statuary of Greece, were merely monuments of the human thumb; that the grasp of the human hand, has been the principal means of placing that long interval which now exists, between the achievements of man and the other tribes, with which he shares the occupancy of the globe. It would not be difficult, I think, to show the fallacy of this supposition, and to demonstrate, that it is to the noble gift of reason, the fact that he is created in the image of God's own intellectual being, which gives him dominion over the beasts of the earth, the fowls of heaven, and the fishes of the sea. The whole tribe of the apes, resembles man very nearly in physical organization, particularly in the power of grasping, and wielding at will, whatever it holds. But in the absence of that spark of celestial fire, which alone gives dignity to the human form, the resemblance to man only makes the ape more odious and contemptible. Notwithstanding then, the possession of that exquisite instrument—the hand, without the reasoning head to guide it, man would have been as stationary and helpless as the apes, and would have been able to inhabit those climates alone, where the fruits spring spontaneous and winter is unknown.

It is only then, by the reasoning soul, the inspiration of the Almighty, which giveth man understanding,

and enables him to perceive and apply the mechanical powers of nature, that the wonderful organ, the hand, can be made of any material advantage. It is only by having the power to discover and appropriate the mechanical agents, or in other words, to invent and to make machines, and to compel them to labor in his service, that man has been able to surround himself with all that now blesses and adorns his earthly lot.

The different stages of the progress of man, not only in divine but human knowledge, are clearly laid down in the Sacred Scriptures, which are in this respect, as philosophical and true to the natural order of things in social progress, as they are sublime in the theology they teach. The first man must have been dependent on the spontaneous fruits of the earth. Previous to that knowledge which is the slow acquirement of time and experience, man, as our first parents are represented to have done, could only pluck and eat. The next generation took the second step. They tilled the earth, and kept flocks and herds, on whose milk or whose flesh they might feed, and with whose skins they might clothe themselves. But all this could not be done without machinery, without instruments. These were at hand in wood, and in stone, and in the sinews of animals. Hence the invention of the spade and the knife. With pasturage, followed hunting; and hence the first weapons of offence, the spear and arrow. The next age of

mankind was marked by the discovery of iron, and the process of reducing the ore into metal, and the metal into tools, at once the most wonderful achievement of a rude age, and the one great and omnipotent instrument of the advancement of mankind. Iron is reason's right hand; the use of it is the handmaid of art, the mother of civilization; and if God ever anticipated the natural operations of the human intellect, we must believe it was in giving to man the idea of extracting that most precious metal, from those unsightly and unpromising masses of rocks, in which it is confined. It was the most important discovery that was ever made—for the simple reason, that it has been the great instrument of the development of the mechanical powers of nature. It is the indispensable instrument in the construction, and the most important constituent element, of all those machines, by which man's power of nature is increased, and his numerous wants supplied. Without it, mankind never would have advanced far beyond the condition in which the aborigines of this country were found, on the discovery of this continent. A rude hut, a little patch of corn or esculent roots, and the produce of fishing and the chase, and some manufactured clothing of the coarsest kind, would have been the limit of their acquirements. There would have been no written laws, no history, no science, none of that exuberance of outward or intellectual good,

which so strongly contrasts the present inhabitants of this continent with their savage predecessors.

The taming, and use of the domestic animals, for draught and burden, must have been another important era in the progress of mankind. But without machinery, their aid would have been next to useless. The plough and the harrow, drawn by the ox or the horse, must have created a mightier revolution on this earth, than any thing since discovered. Farming, before that period, must have been conducted on a very small scale. By this invention, the productive powers of the earth and of the labor of man, must have been quadrupled at least. The little garden extended itself to acres, and where there was but one human being, there might now be four or five, infinitely better provided than the thinner population had been before. But three human beings were thrown out of employment, to use the superficial argument of the enemies of machinery. They would not have starved however, had they continued out of employment, for the fourth man, assisted by the machinery of the plough and the harrow, would produce as much as they all. There was no danger of their remaining unemployed as long as there were human wants to supply, and they had hands and invention to supply them. There was the rude hut to transform into a more comfortable dwelling; the heap of leaves or straw to be converted into a warmer

and more seemly place of repose; the garments to be made of a finer texture, and a more comely model. Thus these two simple machines, the plough and the harrow, worked by the strength of the domestic animals, not only entirely revolutionized agriculture, but put a new face on the whole condition of society, and raised man at once to a state of comfort, that had never before entered into his imagination.

Next to agriculture, came the means of transportation. The fruits of the earth must not only be raised, but brought home. Conceive of the labor and loss of time to bring home each sheaf by itself, by human hands, and even by beasts of burden. The next thing to carrying, is traction. But many things would be wasted and destroyed by that process. Something must be placed beneath them to prevent the injury. Still the surface of the ground was rough and difficult to pass over. A smooth bridge must be made to remedy its roughness, and level its inequalities. That bridge was found in the common wheel—an invention now never thought of as wonderful, but in fact, one of the most complete and perfect and useful for its purpose, that has sprung from the ingenuity of man. It is in fact, an interminable, portable bridge, with a highly polished surface, which the vehicle pulls up after it, and sets down before it as it goes, making the whole process of locomotion a most ready and extemporaneous affair.

It is laid down and taken up with the greatest ease through wet and dry, over hill and dale, over the stones and through the mud; and what is most wonderful of all, it in fact, shortens the distance, so far as friction is concerned, in precise proportion of the circumference of the wheel to the circumference of the axle-tree. Tongue cannot tell, imagination cannot conceive, the benefits which this simple machine has conferred upon mankind. For its perpetual and universal use, it may be said to rank next to the plough, and as the vehicle of trade and travel, that effective stimulant of all improvement, it has played a most conspicuous part in the progress of mankind. Its inventor was one of the greatest benefactors of his race; and though his memory be lost in the night of ages,—and no one can tell where his ashes are laid,—how much better does he deserve to live in the recollections of the world, than Cæsar or Napoleon, who trampled nations in the dust.

“But man,” says Burke, “is an animal that cooks his victuals.” He has not only to raise the productions of the earth, but to prepare them for food. The farina or flour of the different species of grain, has always been the principal food of man, and we have sacred authority for calling bread “the staff of life.” The shepherds of Canaan must have perished had it not been for the corn of Egypt. But the human being is not furnished with teeth to convert the

different species of grain immediately into food. Some intermediate preparation must take place. And here again, was a fitting purpose for the introduction of machinery. The grain must be bruised and reduced to a powder before it is fit for the use of man. Hence the process of pounding in a mortar, or perhaps what was nearly as early, that of crushing and pulverizing the grain between two stones, which gradually improved into the hand mill—the only method known perhaps for thousands of years. By this wearisome process, the labor of preparing bread was almost equal to that of producing it. A mill, and in large families several, were a necessary appendage to every domestic establishment. Allusions are made to this in the Bible, as early as the time of Moses. It was the work allotted to a part of the female servants, and constituted the lowest kind of servitude. “The first born of Egypt shall die, from the first born of Pharaoh that sitteth on the throne, to the first born of the maid servant that is by the mill.” When imposed on men it was the lowest indignity. It was threatened by Isaiah to the Babylonians, when for their sins, they should be led into captivity. Sampson was made to grind in the prison house of the Philistines. When there were many at work together, they accompanied their toil with their voices. Hence the image of desolation in Ecclesiastes, in that most exquisite description of old age, “when the sound of

the grinding is low." Alluding to the unceasing nature of this operation, our Saviour says of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, "two women shall be grinding at the mill." It is curious to see precisely the same domestic arrangement alluded to by Homer, the oldest profane author, six or eight hundred years before Christ. He makes Ulysses, after his secret return to his family, listen by night to the soliloquy of one of the women, who were grinding in a building near to where he slept. The laboriousness and great expense of this operation, are shown by the number of persons he represents to be so employed. Twelve women it takes to grind meal for the household of Ulysses, who is represented as a nobleman of only moderate possessions.

"Beneath a pile, that close the dome adjoined,
Twelve female slaves the gift of Ceres grind;
Tasked for the royal board to bolt the bran
From the pure flour, the growth and strength of man."

Conceive then, of the immense amount of human labor which was set free by the substitution of a natural agent, the power of gravitation in the fall of water, for the strength of human muscles. Nature's laborers work unpaid, or what amounts to the same thing, they consume nothing as they toil. All that they produce then, is so much absolute gain. The achievement of pressing them into the service of

mankind, is equal to the creation of so many men as they supersede, with this economical superiority of the new species, that it costs nothing to feed, clothe, and lodge them, they lose no time in taking rest, they never grow old, nor can they wear out. All that is necessary is, to turn the stream a little out of its ancient channel, where it was accustomed in mere idleness to murmur for its own amusement. How many human beings, think you, it would require in the primitive way, to supply the flour, which is annually brought to this market, and how much more must every barrel cost, and how inferior would the product be? It could hardly be accomplished by the whole population of Maryland.

But then, the opponent of machinery would exclaim,—“what a number of people it must have thrown out of employment!” We answer, that, paradoxical as it may appear, all the great strides which the human race has made in physical advancement, have been attended with this same result, of throwing large masses out of employment. The plough turned multitudes of men adrift, and so did the water mill as many women. At first sight, to be sure, it was lamentable, but there was just as much meal produced as before, and no suffering on that account. They could not remain idle, for their mothers, fathers and brothers, would not let them. It merely had the effect then, to turn a larger force to

the spindle, the loom and the needle, and all the extra cloth and garments they produced, were so much gain to the world. It was so much added to the comfort, the civilization, the decency, and we may suppose, the morality of mankind. Thus the effects of the substitution by means of machinery, of natural agents in the place of human labor in one department of production is felt in every other, creates a greater abundance, improves the quality of the product, and thus spreads its benign influence over the whole surface of human life.

The mention of the loom leads me to speak of it as one of the most important inventions. Its introduction was an era in the history of the human race. The process of spinning was more obvious, and chiefly important as subsidiary to it. The invention of the loom is attributed to the Egyptians. It is certainly of very high antiquity, as cloth is found upon the mummies dug from the catacombs of Egypt, of the utmost delicacy of texture, which was deposited perhaps, long before the date of the most ancient historical record of our race. Allusion is made to the process of weaving in one of the oldest books extant (the Book of Job,) "My days," says he, "are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." Before this invention, there could have been little of what is now called comfort in the world. For Burke might have added to his definition of man, that he is an animal which makes

his own clothes, not having been furnished by nature like the other animals, with that most necessary defence against the rudeness of the elements. Here was a case, in which of all others, machinery was most indispensable. Food, to a considerable degree, grows spontaneously, but no soil has been ever found which produces clothes. The earth indeed, furnishes the materials in great abundance, flax, cotton, and bark, and sheep and worms supply wool and silk. But they were next to useless, till they were manufactured. Nor could bare human fingers alone manufacture them to any great extent. The spindle and the loom were the means of answering that cardinal inquiry of man in every age of the world, "Where-withal shall we be clothed."

The spindle and the loom have in all ages been consigned to female hands, and as long ago as the days of Solomon, industry and skill in this employment were the chief characteristics of an estimable woman. "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands take hold on the distaff. She maketh fine linen and selleth it, and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for her household is clothed with scarlet."

The art of manufacturing cloth was probably nearly stationary for three thousand years. The very

name of the most exquisite product of the loom, shows that it arrived at its greatest perfection in one of the most ancient cities of the world. Damask, that most beautiful fabric, so much the delight and wonder of our childish eyes, betrays in its very name, its origin in that city which was the birthplace of Abraham's steward. No important improvement took place in the process of making cloth, till within a little more than a half century, when the invention of the spinning jenny, and soon after the power loom or, in other words, the new combination of the spindle and the loom with other machines, the steam engine and the water wheel, has commenced another era in the civilization and physical comfort of the human race. By this wonderful combination, results have already been achieved, which outstrip the dreams even of the poets and enthusiasts of the olden time. By it, in half a century, the productive power of England has been increased tenfold. It has made her the richest country on earth; and, while she is scarcely larger than one of the largest states of our union, she has made the world her tributary. Money flows in upon her from every quarter of the globe, for the simple reason, that one of her inhabitants by the aid of machinery, can produce as much as four, in the other parts of the earth, on an average. In her immense trade therefore, she always has the advantage. She has more to sell, in precise proportion

to the amount of labor done by natural agents, above the same number of people in any part of the world, who work merely with their own hands. Similar effects are beginning to develop themselves in our own country. The town of Lowell, in Massachusetts, with six thousand operatives, now manufactures as much cloth as the whole population of New England, before the establishment of factories. So that the waters of the Merrimack, after having for ages uselessly tumbled down a precipice, may now be said to clothe a million of people. The result is, that people can no longer afford to manufacture their own cloth. The women are again thrown out of employment. What they will now betake themselves to, it is not so easy to see. One resource is left them in the needle, and as no machinery has ever been invented to supersede the human fingers in the use of that instrument, they may still find employment in making up the new millions of yards, which machinery is constantly pouring out upon the world. What labor remains after use is satisfied, may perhaps, be laid out on the ornamental; and at any rate, we may be sure that in our day, no needle will ever be idle, while those, who toil not nor spin, are willing to give a hundred dollars for an embroidered pocket handkerchief!

But it would have been next to in vain, that the productive power of man were increased to any

degree, had there arisen no such operation as trade. When the farmer had produced all he could consume, he had no motive to raise any more; the weaver, when he had clothed himself and his family, would let his loom stand still. It was only by exchange of productions that each was stimulated to push his profession to the utmost. Hence the rise of commerce. But this, like agriculture and manufactures, must have its machines. Without them, nothing could be accomplished. We have already spoken of one, the wheel, the eldest and most important. This, however, could accomplish but half the work. Three fifths of the surface of our earth are covered with water; and when commerce had arrived at the sea shore with her treasures, her progress was stopped. How was she to reach across to the treasures which beckoned to her from the other side? Long must the ocean have put a bound to the wanderings of man, and barred from his enterprise the fruits and products of other lands. Little did he think however, that its blue and vast expanse was one day to become the highway of nations, and the rolling flood which separated continents, the very means of bringing them into intimacy with each other.

“Or oak, or brass, with triple fold
Around that daring mortal’s bosom rolled,
Who first to the wild ocean’s rage
Launched the frail bark, and heard the winds engage.”

This great step in the advancement of mankind was taken too by the aid of machinery. For what is a ship but a vast machine, or rather combination of machines, for the purpose of transportation on the sea? Would you feel the grandeur of the triumphs, which the force of mind has achieved by the instrumentality of the mechanic powers over the wild and stormy elements, the ease with which the most gigantic obstacles have been overcome, which interpose in the way of human enterprise, go any day to the vessels which lie at our wharves. It is only habit which prevents us from daily being struck with wonder and awe, at the construction and achievements of a ship. A few months ago perhaps, she was lying in another hemisphere at the opposite side of the earth, her keel towards us, and her masts pointing to another sky. Strange people were about her, of another aspect and another speech. Stars were shining over her which we have never seen. Now she is here, laden with products as foreign as if they had dropped from the moon, and written over with characters as mysterious as the hieroglyphics of Egypt. But can it be that she is the creation, and subjected to the will, of those puny beings, who walk her decks and dot her rigging? See how they fill her with the products of our soil. With a slender rope, fastened by a simple machine to her masts, they are seen to cause such bodies to mount up her sides

as by their fall would crush them to atoms. And now loaded with the products of our peculiar soil, her sails are spread, and another of nature's unpaid laborers, the wind, whose fiery steeds the mariner has yoked into the car of commerce, bears her bounding over the waves. Fearless she launches into the boundless sea. Night and day she pursues her way over the trackless deep, her mighty bulk, through the power of the simplest machinery, made obedient to the tiny being who sits at her helm. Storm and darkness overtake her, yet she loses not her way. The Genius of machinery guides her still. There is a mysterious power of nature which man has pressed into his service, the magnet, that like a talisman, watches over his safety. Another machine of a more complicated form, has kept account of every hour and moment that has elapsed since he left the shore. And what is still more wonderful, another instrument, once but wood and flintstone and ashes, has only to be directed to the starry heavens, and pointed towards a planet millions of miles distant, to tell him by the revolutions of its satellites, which the naked eye of man has never seen, the exact point he has reached of that shoreless expanse, where bounds and landmarks are unknown.

Who shall attempt to enumerate or describe the benefits which this mightiest of machines, the ship, has conferred upon mankind? It may safely be said

to have been the cause of existence to millions of the human race. Passing over the fact, that it was by means of it that this continent became known to the civilized nations of the earth, and it was by the means of the intercourse, which it produced, that a new race has sprung up here, already beginning to rival the kingdoms of the old world, what addition has it made to the comfort and resources of every nation under heaven! It brings the delicious fruits of the tropics to the door of the frozen inhabitants of the polar regions, and carries ice in return, to cool the lips of the fainting dwellers under the burning line. It communicates the productions of every soil, to every other where they will grow, and surrounds all, who are willing to labor for them, with the luxuries of the whole earth.

Above all, it is commerce that stimulates production, and excites by rewarding to the utmost that labor, which is the purchase money of all earthly good. Savage man is cursed not so much by ignorance as by indolence. He is not so much straitened by the little power he has, as he is discouraged and paralyzed by the fact that he can accomplish no more. There is no way to rouse him to action so effectual as to show him the products of another's industry, which he can procure by redoubling his own. But barter must always involve transportation, and transportation, if expensive, may entirely consume

the product, and thus destroy every motive to produce. Every improvement, then, in the machinery of transportation adds new value to the productions of the soil and of labor, and stimulates anew the enterprise and the ingenuity of man. The ship is the most perfect of all machines for transportation, and I have heard a merchant, engaged in the Baltic trade, observe, before the late improvements in land carriage, that he could bring a ton of iron from St. Petersburg cheaper than he could transport it into the interior of Massachusetts. In this light, therefore, we may consider the canals and railroads, which are absorbing so much of the attention of the world, as improved machines for transportation, made to supersede and supplant man's ancient friend, the simple wagon wheel. It is true, like all other improvements, they throw thousands of horses and men out of employment, but it is only to find one much more profitable. The surplus wheat, which before was consumed in coming to market, so as at home to be worth next to nothing, now profitably employs all the labor that can be expended in producing it.

But the mightiest agent that man has ever enlisted in aid of his labors remained to be discovered, almost in our own time, in the expansive power of steam. I am aware that this subject has been so often introduced, that to many it has become tiresome,

and to some tedious. Tiresome it may, but exhausted it cannot be. It is a new and unknown force introduced into the labors of man of which we have seen the beginning, but no mortal eye can see the end. We have just begun to feel the ripple of its first circling wave, and we know that it revolutionizes every thing as it goes. What will it do when it shall have rolled on till it has reached the utmost circumference of human affairs! But a short time has elapsed since it propelled the first ship across the Atlantic. The shouts of congratulation have hardly died away since the old and the new world shook hands across the mighty ocean which rolls between them. We have seen the elements engaged in a new contention, which shall most effectually minister to the wants and the pleasures of man. The winds, his winged messengers, are themselves outstripped by a fiercer spirit than they, and fire threatens to take the place of those swift and viewless couriers in the intercourse of the world. By this invention unknown power and wealth are discovered in the bowels of the earth. The mines of Mexico and Peru are found to be worthless when compared with the beds of coal which underlie vast tracts both of the old and the new world. It has been well said, that the steam engines of England fought the battles of Europe against the crushing despotism of Napoleon, and turned the scale against him in that great contest,

which he waged for the dominion of the world. It has been calculated that the work done by machinery in Great Britain, of which the steam engine is the principal, is equal to that of twenty millions of laborers. Hence the mighty power of England. Hence the fact, that her name, though she be but a speck in the ocean, is terrible to the ends of the earth, and the sun never sets upon her dominions.

The last machine which time will permit me to notice, is the printing press. Hitherto we have been speaking of those contrivances which had for their object the better supply of the physical comforts and conveniences of mankind. That of printing touched a higher sphere. It changed the whole condition of the human mind—the seat of all happiness, and the source from which all physical improvement primarily proceeds.

One of the great benefits which the adoption of labor saving machines afforded, was setting free a portion of mankind for the cultivation of the mind, for the investigations of science, for the collection of knowledge, for the cultivation of literature. By this means, a few leading minds became capable of directing the physical energies of the mass to the worthiest objects, and to the best means of accomplishing them. But so long as there was no other means of spreading abroad the results of their labors, than writing alone, learning must necessarily have

been confined to the few. The cost of books was so immense, that kings and princes only could afford them. While then the sun of science, just rising above the horizon, gilded a few of the most prominent objects, the great mass of the people groped in Cimmerian darkness. The time was, not many centuries since, when the power to read was so uncommon that it exempted the possessor of it from the legal penalty of almost every crime. What could have been the moral and intellectual condition of a community so ignorant as this! What power was there to emerge from barbarism, when knowledge, the only instrument of improvement, was locked from the common people? That intellectual force which God distributes in equal measure to rich and poor, and which in one individual revolutionizes the world, was in a majority of cases, lost to mankind, and Watts, Arkwrights and Fultons might be born and die without ever discovering in themselves the talents by which they might have changed the whole face of human affairs. And so, as far as we can see, would it have been forever. The institution of civil government would never have been sufficiently purified and improved to have given that security to human rights, which is necessary to develop the energies of man or the resources of nature; and even that blessed book, the Bible, would have been able only to keep up a sort of twilight in the world.

A community, every one of whose members can read; books, nay, the book of books in every cottage; a contrivance by which the most important discovery might be known in a few months to the whole population of the civilized world; the phenomenon which is now presented of the speech of the Chief Magistrate of a nation speeding in all directions with the velocity almost of light, and in a few days being read at every fireside for thousands of miles circuit, would have been once considered as the dream of a brainsick enthusiast. Yet this has been accomplished by the printing press.

Such are some of the stupendous achievements of machinery, for I have not alluded to a thousandth part of what might here be detailed, and yet the science of mechanism is yet in its infancy. The sciences, which are subsidiary, and which are tributary to it, are of recent origin, and are still far from perfect. There are men living, who may be said to be older than chemistry. The application of steam to mechanical purposes dates not even so far back, and the speed that it has given to locomotion is a work of our own day.

What, then, are its results as far as it has gone? In answer to this question, I have only to point you to almost any one of the comforts and conveniences by which you are daily surrounded, to the clothes you wear, the books you read, the houses you dwell in,

and the luxuries of every climate, which load your tables. I have only to tell you that the family of any industrious mechanic in this city is better clothed, better lodged, and better fed, than princes and nobles were three hundred years ago. In the age of Queen Elizabeth a heap of clean straw was thought very comfortable sleeping, and a few rushes spread on the bare ground was their only floor. That vast variety of fruits and vegetables which every where abound, and which have been collected from every shore, was then unknown, or could only be procured by the most opulent as a rare and costly luxury. And for the miserable subsistence which our ancestors then obtained, they were compelled to labor even harder and more incessantly than their children, for they wanted those auxiliaries in labor saving machines that we possess. The cottager worked harder to spin her pound of yarn a day, than the factory girl now does in superintending the spinning of twenty. The transcriber was nearly as long in writing out a single copy of a book, as the compositor now is in setting the types from which ten thousand copies can be struck. The muleteer worked quite as hard in bringing a few sacks of grain to market, as the engineer now does to transport fifty tons over ten times the distance. It was this incessant toil, and the small resources which resulted from it, that more than any thing else, precluded man's intellectual and moral

cultivation. The young had not the time, the parents had not the means for education. As soon as they were capable of rendering any assistance at the plough or spinning wheel, their services were required to eke out the slender subsistence of the family. It was only when machinery was pressed into the service and made to do their labor, that they were able to devote two or three years of youth to the purposes of education.

But it may be asked "Are there no evils to counterbalance all this good; is there no danger in thus turning thousands after thousands out of employment, by substituting machinery in their stead? What is to become of these thousands suddenly deprived of all support?" We answer, that all great improvements have been attended with this temporary evil. But it is not only temporary but partial, and results in universal good. They are always provided for, because the increased production at smaller expense reduces the prices of the article upon which they have been employed. The consumers pay less money for the same necessary or luxury than they did before, and, of course, save the difference. What will they do with the sum thus saved? Hoard it? By no means, not in money at least, but either spend it in transitory luxuries, or some permanent improvement. In the production of that luxury or improvement, all the idle hands will be soon employed, and then the

increased production, and the diminution in price will be ever after so much substantial gain to the world. To none will the gain be greater than to these very people, who live by the work of their own hands. To them cheapness is every thing, and a general cheapening of necessities and luxuries does just so much to bring them on a level with the most wealthy.

But it may be further enquired if the substitution of machinery will not so reduce the price of labor as to bring distress on the industrious classes? We answer, that this fear is justified neither by theory nor facts. No such consequence has as yet been felt; and a man certainly, who can produce forty yards a day, can better be paid a dollar than if he could produce only twenty. And even if wages were reduced one half, he would be no loser, if, through machinery, the price of every thing he has to buy were reduced to one quarter. So it is through all branches of labor.

One more objection may be made. As all the support of man comes ultimately from the earth, will not this rapid increase of population, created by manufactures, soon reach the limit of its productiveness, and thus all be overtaken with famine? We answer, that this period, by this very improvement of mechanical powers, has been indefinitely postponed. Every horse which is superseded by canals, and rail

roads, and steam engines, liberates three acres of cultivated land for the sustenance of human beings; and the inexhaustible beds of coal, which these very facilities substitute in the place of wood, may turn many millions of acres of forest into cultivated fields, which otherwise would never have added to the number of the human race. It is now altogether impossible to say what the productive powers of the earth are, now that the invention of easier and cheaper means of transportation has brought within reach of the farmer, the lime, the plaster, and the marl, by which its fertility may be increased to almost any extent. In short, so great is the expansion on every side which has lately taken place of the means of the support, the civilization, and the moral improvement of mankind, that the race may be said to be just commencing a new career, of the nature of which the ages that are gone furnish us with no analogies to enable us to conceive:—

“The last great age foretold by ancient rhymes
Begins its final course; Saturnian times
Roll round again, and mighty years begun
From their first orb their radiant circles run.”

The part which our own country is destined to bear in this great order of things, it requires no prophetic ken to foresee. Our free and popular government, which, like the all surrounding atmosphere,

fosters all, without being oppressive to any, gives the widest possible scope for human enterprise, and checks us only when we do wrong. Our vast extent of territory furnishes us with the greatest variety of productions, which can be exchanged without the embarrassments of foreign trade. Our vast and mighty rivers, lakes and bays, afford the easiest and cheapest channels for commerce. Our endless forests of lumber, our inexhaustible beds of iron and coal, our gigantic waterfalls afford us the materials of national wealth, greatness and happiness, such as the world no where else affords. To develop these, we have a degree of education among the industrious classes, which never before had been imagined possible, but which invents each year more machines for the simplifying and shortening of the various processes of manual labor than marked the progress of ages, when labor was thought to be the proper occupation only of serfs and slaves. Our position, too, operates in many ways to our advantage. We have no powerful and dangerous neighbors to turn our energies from the arts of peace to the self destroying enterprises of war or conquest. Our standing armies are not consuming the fruits of the earth in idle pageantry, or in building military fortifications; but they are digging our canals, they are laying our rail roads, they are deepening our rivers, they are opening our mines, and making yearly more productive, the

industry of our growing millions. Cold must be that man's heart, dead must be that American's patriotism, who, without emotion, can take the view which we have imperfectly sketched out of the essential means of human progress, and find them all in unsurpassed abundance in that country which he proudly calls his home. He may be excused if in a moment of enthusiasm he adopts as almost prophetic the sentiment of one of the choicest spirits of our mother land, when he exclaimed—

“Westward the star of empire takes its way,
The four first acts already past,
The fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.”



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